New Statesman

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New Statesman

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New Statesman

Vol 108 No 2792 21 September 1984

'There is no crisis' — official

PRIME MINISTER Callaghan at least had the excuse that he was coming back from a world economic summit in Guadeloupe when at Heathrow, bang in the middle of the Winter of Discontent he uttered the words 'Crisis? What crisis?' Chancellor Lawson's rather curious choice of the same words at the same place, as he took off this week for meetings of the Commonwealth Finance Minister and the International Monetary Fund allows of no such excuse, since he had just left his desk at the Treasury.

It seems that our Nigel really doesn't understand that this country is the throes of a major economic crisis. (It would be too much to expect that he would accept in public that the policies his government has been following over the past five years have been a major contributory factor in that crisis.)

The pound has been devalued against the dollar by just under 50 per cent since 1980. It is by far the greatest sterling devaluation in modern financial history. It has gone relatively unremarked — except by importers, exporters and foreign holidaymakers — only because we are now on a system of floating exchange rates, where supply and demand and not the Chancellor fix the rate. But the fact is that government has produced since 1980 a devaluation against the dollar twice as great as the 1949 and 1967 Labour sterling devaluations combined. At the present rate, Mrs Thatcher is well set to be the Prime Minister who presides over the moment when £1 = $1.

It is not just, as the government machine has been trying to suggest, a question of the strength of the dollar against all other currencies. The trade weighted average value of the pound against all other currencies is now virtually down to the level it was at when Denis Healey was forced by the banking establishment to go on his knees to the IMF for money in October 1976 — that infamous moment in the history of post-war Labour governments.

None of this is an argument for artificial measures to prop up the exchange rate as some kind of virility symbol. The one virtue of market forces and floating exchange rates is that they tell you precisely how the international economic and industrial community values the performance and competitiveness of individual economies. Any attempt by governments to juggle a higher than justified rate of exchange for reasons of its political image always leads — and sooner rather than later — to falling exports, falling domestic employment and industrial disaster.

THAT IS PRECISELY the record of this government's economic policy. In pursuit of mumbo jumbo about monetarism in the first years after 1979 — which could have been laughed off as puerile, if we were not still suffering the catastrophic consequences — British interest rates were pushed up unnecessarily (bank rate was forced up to a quite unprecedented 17 per cent in November 1979). The result was that capital flooded into the country, forcing the exchange rate up to levels at which British industry was quite unable to compete with the rest of the world.

Even the Tory CBI was then screaming for the government to stop a process that was literally deindustrialising Britain. Whole swathes of perfectly viable industry were wiped out in this period,

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with employment consequences that will leave their social and political mark for decades.

The 'one off' windfall that North Sea oil revenues represented to this country has been totally squandered over the same period. It should have been directed to finance new investment in the economic activities needed to support the economy into the next century. Instead, because of political cant about market forces and consumer choice, it has gone into consumption and portfolio investment overseas. The next generation will now derive no measurable benefit from an accident of geology that offered us a real hope of a real new beginning.

Today's sterling exchange rate also reflects the world's judgement on the actual effects of Thatcher's proudly claimed 'new realism' in industry.

The answer is that it has had no effect, even where it was making its strongest claim — namely in turning upwards the long-term decline in Britain's relative industrial productivity.

This should come as no surprise to those who were not so bored by the monotone of Sir Geoffrey Howe's many budget speeches that they failed to take in the fact that they were based on economic nonsense.

If over a succession of years you deliberately run an economy well below its capacity, thus depressing the private sector, and at the same time cut back on investment programmes in key public sectors, like the nationalised industries and local government, and for good measure you also deliberately encourage the maximum of confrontation between employers and their workforce — in both the public and the private sector — in the name of a higher political priority called union bashing, what then would you expect to happen to the underlying level of productivity?

Common sense gives you the answer. Productivity would not rise. But it is rising elsewhere. So the pound's exchange rate falls to compensate for the difference. Get it Nigel? You have failed, but we are paying for it. □

Livingstone's referendum

AS WE GO to press the GLC by-election results for the 'Livingstone four' are unknown. But, whatever the margin of victory, one political fact is indisputable. Mrs Thatcher, her Environment Secretary Patrick Jenkin and her whole government have inflicted major political damage on themselves.

There has been an almost conspiratorial degree of silence in the right-wing press during this by-election campaign, which though local might in other circumstances and at other times have been an obvious target for Ken-baiting and Left-bashing. The GLC itself was not a body with which previously the majority of Londoners associated themselves all that closely. London Transport, yes; the Inner London Education authority, yes: but the GLC itself always felt a bit remote and it was not quite clear precisely what it did.

It is thus a clear political triumph to have got the clear majority of Londoners to the point where they are now strongly opposed to abolition and where Thatcher-Jenkin will seem, even to many London Tories, to be insensitive autocrats, as they push ahead with their proposals.

What has happened is that a wider public has latched on to what is rapidly becoming a clearly dominent characteristic of the Thatcher government — anti-democratic centralism. All that talk about getting central government off people's backs and widening the area of personal choice has been shown up as humbug. The GLC and the Met counties — no matter that they were originally invented at considerable public expense by previous Tory governments — had become centres of alternative views about politics. So this Tory government, at even greater public expense, determined to abolish them. The idea that it mattered, in a political system claiming to be democratic, whether or not its capital city had its own directly elected government did not seem to occur to the Cabinet until it was too late to prevent Jenkin embarking on another political voyage of disaster.

In desperation, now, Jenkin is trying to advance the argument that the abolition of the GLC (and the Met Counties) will actually *increase* local democracy, since most of the existing 'strategic' authorities' functions will be devolved to the existing local authorities under them, which are supposed to be 'closer to the people'.

The claim is a pure debating point. If you list everything that the GLC does from A-Z it is possible to produce a bit of paper which appears to have a longer 'devolved' column than a 'centralised' one. But the reality is different for two reasons. In the first place some functions are bigger than others and almost without exception the ones that cost real money, or are politically sensitive, will now be going to central government, or to government dominated quangos. Transport has already gone. The Greater London Enterprise Board is to be abolished.

Secondly, what practical meaning is there in the proposition that local boroughs should take on more functions, say in housing or community relations, or arts, if at the same time the same central government is capping their rates and forcing dire cuts in their already existing services. It is just a cruel piece of political deception. □

New Statesman Index

The index to Volume 106 (July-December 1983) is now available, price £1.50 (incl. p&p) from: New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, EC1R 3AU.

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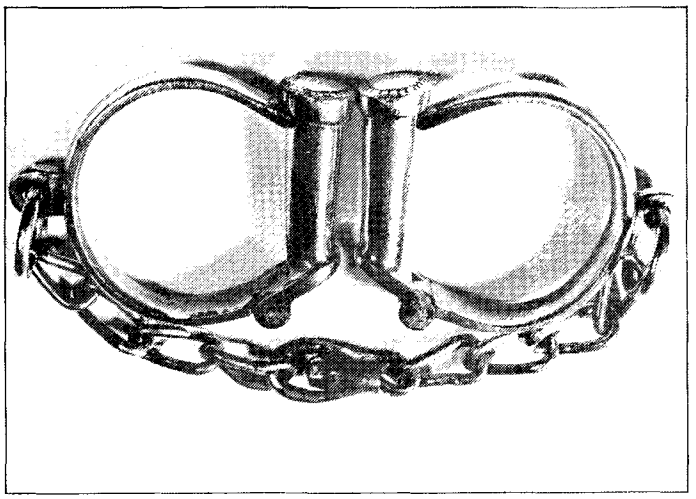
UK'S 'TORTURE TRADE' HAS QUIETLY RESUMED



Carlos Reyes

Above: 'footcuffs', or as Thatcher rightly calls them, leg irons, and. . .

KENYA has apparently just become a beneficiary of the UK export trade in 'restraint' equipment which everyone from the Prime Minister down had promised was being given up. SUZANNE FRANKS and IVOR GABER report

LAST FEBRUARY we reported how Britain was freely exporting torture equipment manufactured by the Birmingham firm of Hiatt — items like leg irons, gang chains and body belts, all of which contravene UN rules on the treatment of prisoners. Despite many assurances to the contrary, it sems the trade is still going on.

Soon after our article appeared (*3 February 1984*) Norman Tebbitt announced that things would be tightened up and these unpleasant implements would henceforth require a special export license. At the same time Mrs Thatcher assured Amnesty International that certainly the Crown Agents, run by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and accordingly a part of government, would have nothing to do with the procurement of leg irons for overseas customers.

On 28 March, to the then satisfaction of the human rights lobby, Tebbit went even further. In answer to a planted Commons question he said that 'licenses will not be issued for the export to any destination of leg irons, shackles and gang chains for the restraint of prisoners'. Only exports for theatrical purposes would even be considered. And in April Mrs Thatcher confirmed in a letter to Amnesty that no more licenses would be issued. In other words the torture trade was over.

Amnesty

. . .what they do to the legs

In view of that it's particulary disturbing to learn that less than two months ago the Crown Agents supplied an order placed by Kenyan prison authorities for 'footcuffs' and mallacca canes. Mallacca canes are long cane whips, usually used to train horses. 'Footcuffs' are just the new name for leg irons, as Mrs Thatcher confirmed in her April letter to Amnesty.

Alf Dubs MP, as a Labour Home Affairs spokesperson, raised the matter last weekend at Amnesty's trade union conference. He accused Tebbit of misleading the House of Commons. 'It's ironic,' he says, 'that in the midst of Amnesty International's campaign against torture the British government should be conniving at the export of degrading instruments likely to be used as an aid to torture.' ●

Eyebrows rise at Re-Chem's explanation

THIN ON THE GROUND are those who believe Re-Chem's claim that its decision — made known this week — to close its contentious plant at Bonnybridge, in Scotland, has nothing to do with the environmental controversy about its toxic waste disposal operations (New Statesman 7 September and 3 August 1984).

The company, which runs two similar plants elsewhere in the UK, one at Pontypool in South Wales, the other near Southampton, is pleading financial problems. But this is at odds with its previous declared enthusiasm for expanding business at Bonnybridge, including the burning of PCBs (poly-chlorinated biphenyls).

As we described on 7 September, the 40-strong workforce, torn between alarm for its health and its jobs, voted to 'black' PCB processing until and unless new tests declared it safe. In making its surprise public announcement of closure this Monday (17 September), Re-Chem can hardly have been unconscious of an impending legal action by a local farmer, Andrew Graham, who plans to sue for £1 million, alleging that pollution from the Bonnybridge plant killed 200 of his cattle.

Rob Edwards

Throw the rule book out: it's only claimant Mendis

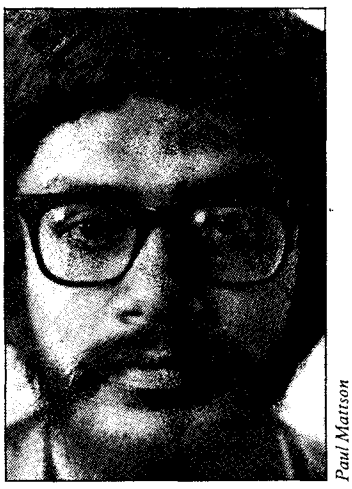
A RANDOM passport check by the DHSS, whose own guidelines forbid such checks, led to an ill-explained suspension of benefit payments to a Manchester claimant, and then to an unexplained restoration, minus a £2 deduction. He just happened to be Viraj Mendis, threatened with deportation to Sri Lanka, where his liberty and even life could be at risk.

Labour-controlled Manchester city council has been officially backing efforts to defend Viraj Mendis — and others in the area — from deportation threats, so he has been attracting a fair degree of local publicity. Sri Lankan born, he came to the city in 1973 at the age of 17 as a student, but by 1975, under financial pressure, had to give up studying and work as a labourer.

This meant he couldn't renew his student visa. In May this year, more than eight years later, his passport was confiscated by Manchester police in order to check his status. He's not yet been informed of any outcome from this 'checking' — and fears he'll be deported.

It was this August that the DHSS joined in. Viraj Mendis has been unemployed for some time and signing on at Aytoun Street employment office in Manchester. On 25 August he had a letter from the DHSS in Great Ancoats Street, asking him to produce his passport. Phoning to ask why, he was told it was 'a random check'.

He told the DHSS he didn't have his passport but expected to be able to give them information about it in the near future. The DHSS seemed satisfied with that.



Paul Mattson

Viraj Mendis — now whyever would DHSS have picked him for a random check?

The following week, on 30 August, his benefit payment didn't arrive. When he asked why, he alleges a local DHSS official told him 'Mr Mendis there has been a lot of publicity about your case and questions have been raised about your status' — an explanation which contradicts the earlier remark about 'random checks'.

In fact, DHSS guidelines on this matter forbid random checks. Mendis adds that the DHSS refused to say who had raised 'questions'. Mendis points out that if the DHSS knew of the publicity about his case then they'd have know he didn't have his passport. Following further publicity and local pressure from the Viraj Mendis defence campaign, his benefit has been restored without explanation. The DHSS hasn't explained why it has been reduced by £2.

Viraj Mendis is Sinhalese but has publcily supported the Tamil people against the present Sir Lankan government. He believes that if he is returned to the island he'll face the possibility of detention without trial. He points out that known supporters of the Tamil people have been assassinated in Sri Lanka.

Terry O'Halloran

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Euro-court D-day for 'immigration widows'

THE LONG-RUNNING struggle between Britain's 'immigration widows' and the Home Office moves to the European Court of Human Rights on Tuesday (25 September). In a test case backed by the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants the complaints of three women separated from their husbands by Britain's immigration rules will be heard.

Nargis Abdulaziz, Sohair Balkandali, and Arcely Cabales will be alleging that the ban on foreign husbands' right of entry unless the wife (or fiancée) or one of her parents was born in the UK contravenes the European Convention on Human Rights, to which of course the UK is a signatory. The ban was introduced by the Conservative government in 1980.

An amendment in 1983, under which the Home Office allow the husbands of British women to enter the UK if the authorities are 'satisfied that it is not for immigration purposes', has brought no relief to 'immigration widows' such as Mrs Abdulaziz, who aren't British citizens. A *man* living in Britain may be joined here by his wife whatever citizenship he holds.

In its submission to the European Commission of Human Rights (through which applications to the Court must pass) the Government maintained that its regulation is designed to reduce unemployment — 'society still expects the man to go out to work and the woman to stay at home' — and to quell 'social tension' caused, it claimed, by 'fears about levels of immigration'.

The Commission was not impressed. It found a *prima facie* case that Articles 8 and 14 of the European Convention are being breached by the UK (the right to family life and the right to enjoy the rights and freedoms set out in the Convention without discrimination on grounds such as sex, race, place of birth etc). The 'widows' are also claiming that Article 3 (protection from inhuman and degrading treatment) is being breached.

Fiona Mactaggart

. . . and a D-Day for Yorkshire authority

BACK in London, Tuesday sees the Home Office meeting called to decide — if decide it can — on South Yorkshire's Labour-controlled police committee's decision to get rid of its Chief Constable's 18 police horses and half the 34 dogs. Not to mention its refusal to pay a £3½ million bill for outside forces policing picket lines in the area.

Only those who've been faced with an aggressive mounted rider know how terrifying mounted police can be (*see picture*) but the real struggle is over accountability, and the attempted use of cash controls if all else fails to demonstrate some degree of electoral control over police activity. South Yorkshire has already once been defeated, in July, after the battles at Orgreave coking plant, in efforts to use cash curbs on its Chief Constable.

As to the horses: locals in Viking Way old people's estate half a mile from Kiveton Park colliery were invaded before dawn in the last week of August by mounted police in full riot gear, apparently searching for hidden pickets. A 67-year-old, Irene Kirkland, hid pickets in her own home when she saw what was happening, and the violence that befell miners when they were caught.

John Rose

John Harris/IFL

Even the horse is visored — mounted police at Orgreave 18 June, truncheon raised, shirtless man running

MISCELLANY

Moles strike back

What with the Liberals being the party of open government etc, it seemed a bit strange to hear the noble art of leaking condemned at the Liberal Assembly earlier this week. 'I for one find it profoundly alarming,' said one delegate. 'Documents must be confidential,' said another, adding: 'For me this is a question of trust.'

Realising what he'd said, the second speaker went on: 'Open government also requires responsibility.' But they were not talking about cruise missile memos or Belgrano minutes. No, they were condemning an (unnamed) member of their own national executive, who had leaked a confidential paper called A Strategy for the Liberal Party *to the* New Statesman *(10 August). The name of the second speaker, the vice chair of the party's national executive and David Steel's political assistant is Stuart Mole.*

Town hall follies

One of Andrew 'Two Chauffeurs' Neil's finest achievements as new editor of the *Sunday Times* was an article which took up the whole of the front page of the Review section on 13 May, called 'Town Hall Follies'. By Andrew Stephen, it was a comprehensive attack on The Socialist Republic of Islington. The first paragraph made fun of the council's commitment to gay rights, and most of the rest was an explanation of why, just because Labour won 51 out of 52 seats in 1982, nobody in Islington had actually *meant* to vote socialist. Margaret Hodge, the leader of the council, was instructed by the Labour group to seek redress, as not only was the article grossly biased but it also contained a number of inaccuracies. Hodge duly complained both to the Press Council and to the National Union of Journalists, which is setting up a new complaints procedure. Hodge has now withdrawn her complaint to the NUJ, writing to the union to explain that this is the result of a telephone call she received at the end of July from David Lipsey, economics editor of the *Sunday Times* and father of the NUJ chapel there. She understood him to imply that if she did not withdraw the complaint, she would be on the receiving end of further unfavourable coverage. Lipsey denies that the conversation ever took place. Hodge says she has nothing to hide, but has been distressed at the harassment of her four young children by the *Daily Mail* after a piece appeared in *The Times* diary about her nanny. The Press Council complaint continues to be investigated.

British Torycon

It's official. The government is allowed to lie in its advertisements. The Advertising Standards Authority has received a number of complaints about the factual accuracy of full-page press adverts for British Telecom shares, issued by merchant bank Kleinwort Benson on behalf of HM Government. For one thing, the adverts offer the chance to own a share of British Telecom. It is probably a matter of argument that by virtue of being British citizens everyone already owns a share, and that privatisation is a device to take away from the majority something they already have. But the adverts also assert that 'an Act of Parliament has made it possible for each of us to buy British Telecom shares'. As there is a minimum of £250, and the Act does not provide 'each one of us' with the money, that statement is simply not true. The ASA, however, has written to complainants saying its code of practice 'imposes no restrictions in regard to either expressions of opinion or *assertions of fact* in advertisements concerned with matters of political religious or social controversy' (our emphasis).

TV: a simple medium

Poor Tam Dalyell. There he was on television this week trying as usual to make a serious case against the political conduct of the Falklands War and, as has happened before, the programme makers had found some relatives of those killed in the war to condemn him 'for dragging all this through the media for his own personal advancement in parliament'. Tam was left without the right of reply as the credits rolled, with the following letter on his lap: 'Dear Mr Dalyell, I feel that I must write and thank you for your persistent and tireless enquiries into the sinking of the *Belgrano* and subsequent war in the Falklands. We lost a very fine son at Goose Green with the Parachute Regiment, and while he was a dedicated soldier and did his duty to the last he also trusted that it would be a last resort to use force. My husband and I do not believe this was the case and also are very grieved to think that Mrs Thatcher has made political capital from the loss of these lives both British and Argentinian.'

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SCOTS RAID BY CUSTOMS AS LAWSON SLEEPS ON

ILLITERATE interference with lesbian and gay male reading matter by Customs & Excise — and also by police — is continuing despire protests in the Commons (14 May 1984) and by leading British book publishers. Customs' political master Nigel Lawson, journalist by trade, continues to evade answering for the Customs' conduct.

When the Commons resume business on 22 October a Palace of Westminster protest meeting against the behaviour of Customs & Excise is being organised. The latest performance has been detention of leading American lesbian journals and other material which had been intended for sale by Lavender Menace bookshop in Edinburgh during the Edinburgh Festival — the same Festival at which Win Wells' play about lesbians Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas (*Gertrude Stein and a Companion*) received rave reviews.*

The illiteracy had already been demonstrated a year before, in November 1983, when a Customs' seizure of books intended for Lavender Menace included *Querelle*, by Jean Genet, currently on sale in the UK in a Granada edition. One of the many anomalies in Customs law now being highlit is that what may be published *in* the UK is no defence against the Customs' freedom to stop written material at UK ports of entry.

On 24 August Customs 'detained' (the next step, if they take it, is 'seizure' — *see NS 24 August 1984*) Lavender Menace's copies of *Common Lives/Lesbian Lives*, published bimonthly for the last three years by a group of women in Iowa City, and *Sinister Wisdom*, published (at present from Maine) four times a year for the last 12 years. Both are distinguished American lesbian periodicals, the latter at one period edited by Adrienne Rich.

Customs' harassment of the Scottish bookshop goes back to 1980, when the American East Coast publication *Fagrag* was seized from the Open Gaze Books Collective, out of which Lavender Menace evolved in 1982. The American publishers of *Fagrag* commented at the time that Scotland accordingly found itself in the company of one other nation which had confiscated the magazine: South Africa.

David Fowler

'Crisis? What crisis?' Lawson — who protects Customs views on the boundaries of 'morality'

Meanwhile Customs continue to detain some £6,000 worth of imports by Gay's the Word bookshop, in London's Bloomsbury, and a date is awaited for hearings about 22 lesbian and gay titles already seized. Further Customs law anomaly: Customs have power (and are understood to be considering using it) to seize *all* the contents of any one consignment of mixed books if they decide that in their view *one* of the titles is 'indecent'.

Thames & Hudson, Faber & Faber, Victor Gollancz, and Chatto & Windus have written messages of support to Gay's the Word, as have many bookshops. *Index on Censorship* is preparing to publish an article on HM Customs' activities as a question of censorship — and NCCL is contemplating an exhibition in its windows of the range of titles with which Customs is interfering.

PEN, the international society of authors, with special concern for those whose words are silenced, has expressed its concern. And the Society of Authors, whose centenary is this year, is prepared to get involved — in response to novelist Rosemary Manning's appeal in the *Guardian* on 15 August — if any of its 3,000 authors invite it to do so.

'The step from raids on gay bookshops to proscribing certain authors and to public book-burning', wrote Rosemary Manning, 'is by no means as short as is supposed. The difference between confiscation of books and burning them is only one of method. The result... is the same'.

Some 5,000 gay magazines removed by police from London's Zipper Store in Camden under 'obscene publications' warrants on 25 July have still not been returned after nearly two months, and no charges have been brought. And there have been other Customs or police actions against importers or stockists besides those listed here. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nigel Lawson, is departmentally answerable for the conduct of Customs & Excise.

Andrew Lumsden

*eg Angus Calder, *New Statesman* 24 August 1984, 'they make a long-term lesbian relationship seem not only charming but enviable'.

ACE ADVICE ON HOW TO BREAK SCHOOLS SECRECY

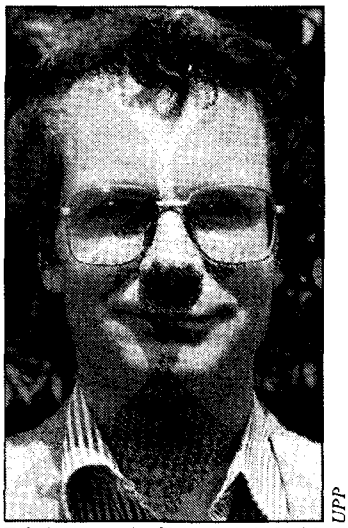
IN AN EFFORT to break the secrecy that surrounds school records two educational pressure groups this week pool resources. The Children's Legal Centre, set up a few years ago to press for children's rights, and the Advisory Centre for Education (ACE), are circulating school governors, parent-teacher associations, and ethnic and women's groups with advice on how to prise information out of local schools.

Labour MP Chris Smith *(Islington South & Finsbury)* tried this July, and failed, to introduce a Private Member's Bill giving parents a statutory right to inspect their children's school records. So now the pressure groups are concentrating their fire on local education authorities and individual head teachers.

All schools keep records on pupils. Sometimes they're harmless, containing details only of a pupil's age, address and such like. But more often highly subjective references to a child's social and family background, behaviour, personality and character are included. Examples have come to light of records with sexist and racist entries.

In a case recently taken up by ACE a school file on a teenage boy was discovered to contain a psychologist's report on his mother: 'From time to time she has a co-habitee there, so the home situation is unstable'. Another child was said to 'come from a very strange home background'. The file of a 14 year old girl included a character report written when she was seven: 'Very much inclined to sulk. Very much inclined to cheat'.

Schools of course use records for compiling job references, for careers guidance and for deciding the most suitable courses and examinations for pupils. Teachers taking a pupil for the first time often check the files for background on his or her character and ability. Children who have difficulty in finding a new school often have 'bad' records.



UPP

Tried to open the files — Chris Smith MP

This year Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) and Brent (an outer London borough) are taking steps to open up their school records. A few heads have of their own accord made records available for comment, and — crucially important — for correction by parents and pupils.

But the overwhelming majority of LEAs and schools stick to secrecy as a matter of principle. The teacher unions favour 'confidentiality' although in a recent discussion document the NUT appeared to be moving nearer towards acceptance of access by both parents and older pupils.

America, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Sweden and Norway, all have legislation giving parents and older pupils the right to see their school records.

Barry Hugill

Belgrano affair

New Statesman visited by Ministry of Defence police

AT 12 NOON on Wednesday 19 September Detective Chief Inspector Hughes of the Ministry of Defence police called at offices of the New Statesman *requesting an interview with editor Hugh Stephenson.*

His enquiries, he stated, were in connection with the Belgrano Papers issue of the New Statesman *published on 24 August. In addition he sought interviews with* New Statesman *writers Duncan Campbell and John Rentoul, authors of the 24 August article about the Falklands War sinking of the Belgrano.*

Hughes stated that he wished to discuss the Confidential memorandum printed in the New Statesman *on 24 August and originally leaked to Tam Dalyell MP, who sent it to the House of Commons Select Committee, which returned it to the Ministry of Defence.*

Hughes further said that his visit was in connection with a possible offence under Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911. Mr Stephenson refused to discuss the subject without taking legal advice. ●

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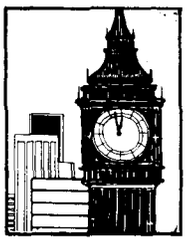

PETER KELLNER

A thinking activist's guide to the magnificent seven

LABOUR PARTY activists divide into two kinds: those who have attended a party conference and know what happens; and those who haven't and don't. For those — the majority — who come into the second category, some guidance is necessary. (The conference-attending minority may talk quietly among themselves for the next few sentences while we get these preliminaries out of the way.)

Each morning, delegates pass a line of people who thrust pieces of paper into their hands. The leaflets, some printed, some cyclostyled, concern anything from fringe meetings on the Common Market to appeals for support for Iranian dissidents. But among the most regular sights on the Monday morning of conference is that of off-yellow duplicated sheets instructing delegates which candidates to support in the elections for the National Executive.

The most important group, as far as this propaganda exercise is concerned, is the constituency section of the executive. The 12 members of the union section are wholly chosen by the unions' block votes, and the treasurer and five members of the women's section are dominated by the same block votes. Who gets elected in those sections is a matter of horse-trading, not Monday morning pamphleteering.

The seven executive members chosen by constituency delegates involve little or no horse-trading. Six hundred individuals, many of whom have either no mandate from their general committees, or only partial mandates ('as long as you vote for Tony Benn and Tam Dalyell, the rest is up to you'), mark their ballot papers and hope for the best.

In such circumstances, clear advantages accrue to the candidates on the Left slate, for theirs is the best organised. Given the inbuilt tendency for most constituency delegates to belong to the Left of the party, it is scarcely surprising that for some years the slate has managed to get at least six, and often all seven, of its candidates elected.

So successful, indeed, has the slate been that it looks at first glance as if something like half the constituency delegates cast their seven votes automatically in line with the Left's recommendation. Not so. Last year, for the first time, the votes of each delegate were recorded and published. Only 80 constituency delegates — fewer than one in seven — voted down the line for the Left's seven. All the others departed in some way from the sacred list. Even if one adds in those delegates who backed Norman Atkinson, who was dropped from the slate in favour of David Blunkett, and those Scottish delegates who voted for their home-grown left-winger, Denis Canavan, the number of down-the-line left votes only rises to a little above 100. (Neither Atkinson nor Canavan is standing this year.)

The prospects, then, for candidates who do not belong to the left slate are not as negligible as they might seem. With that thought in mind, here is this column's anti-slate slate: seven hand-picked candidates, from all sections of the party, who have been chosen for their individual merits rather than because they follow the 'correct' factional line. This slate is unique. Its members have not been consulted about their inclusion; there have been no caucus meetings to draw it up; nobody is instructed to obey its recommendations; no retribution, except possibly for a bad conscience, will be inflicted on those who depart from it. In alphabetical order, here goes:

Jack Ashley If anyone deserves a reward for personal courage in the face of political adversity, it is Ashley. Hopes — high hopes — of a successful political career culminating in a Cabinet post evaporated when he became deaf. He has become one of the Commons' hardest working back-benchers, specialising in the problems of disabled people. As a result he has become one of Parliament's most effective issue-campaigners and would bring to the party's executive campaigning skills it badly needs.

Tony Benn Need one say more? Well, just a little. First, he represents an important strand of party opinion, which it would be both wrong and daft to exclude from either the executive or the shadow cabinet. Second, he has played an important role in heading off destructive assaults on Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley by publicly and repeatedly declaring his support for the new leadership. Third, his Chesterfield by-election campaign stands as a model for honest electioneering.

David Blunkett The obvious point about Blunkett is that he stands in the front line of Labour's fight against Patrick Jenkin's rate-capping plans; if he were voted off the executive, it would have nobody with direct experience of this winter's trench war to contribute to the party's debates. The less obvious point is that Blunkett, who was a newcomer to the executive when he was elected last year, has started complaining, rightly, about the party's organisation, and is agitating for improvement. He needs the chance to keep it up.

Robin Cook If Blunkett is to get anywhere in sorting out Walworth Road, Cook should join him on the executive. Cook is standing with two declared aims. One is to make Walworth Road efficient; the second is to make sure that the party machine is sufficiently well-tuned to campaign effectively in the trade union ballots that will take place over the next 18 months on their political funds. If even a handful of major unions vote to close down their funds and are forced to disaffiliate from the party, the consequences for Labour's finances would be frightening. Cook's experiences — both good and bad — spearheading the party's European Parliament election campaign should make him an indispensable member of Labour's new executive team.

Tam Dalyell Many party members will, if they are honest, admit that they have had doubts at times about Dalyell's *Belgrano* campaign. He has now been vindicated. In politics honour and determination are frequently mistaken for absurdity and obsession. A large vote for Dalyell would demonstrate that we appreciate his qualities, even if the government and most of Fleet Street do not.

Gerald Kaufman Kaufman is a politician's politician — and, on the whole, that is intended as a compliment. First as shadow environment secretary, and now as shadow home secretary, he has been one of Labour's most effective opponents of the government. In his present job he is not only a committed civil libertarian: he has the unusual ability to articulate difficult Labour arguments (for example, when police behaviour needs criticising) in a way likely to attract rather than deter floating voters. What is more, Kaufman, like Benn, represents a strand of Labour thinking that should be represented on both the executive and the shadow cabinet.

Michael Meacher Meacher has had a good year after recovering from his heavy defeat as the Left's candidate for the party's deputy leadership. As shadow social services secretary he led the party's campaign last autumn to protect the National Health Service. This campaign is one of the few recorded instances of Labour MPs and Walworth Road working effectively together. Some right-wingers regard Meacher as an identikit left-wing figure. This is unfair. On a range of issues, from incomes policy to Militant, he has displayed a refreshing capacity to think for himself.

So that is this column's magnificent seven. It is tilted strongly to the Left (five of them supported Benn against Healey three years ago: only Ashley and Kaufman did not), but not to the point of rigid conformity. I have no illusions that many, or indeed any, delegates will vote for all seven. But it would be cheering to think that constituencies and delegates will think for themselves, and not surrender their decisions to the dictation of the left-wing slate. □

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DEATH OF A BATTERED MOTHER

West Yorkshire police have still not published the results of their inquiry into the death of a Bradford mother. Anne Durham describes her family's anger about the circumstances

JULIE STEAD, a 25-year-old Bradford mother of three, was strangled by her boyfriend, Keith Ward, in March 1983. Last December, Ward was found guilty, not of murder, but of manslaughter — on the grounds that he had been subject to 'provocation'. He was jailed for four years.

Julie's family have complained that, despite a long record of violence towards her and several complaints to the police, she was given no protection; that the murder inquiry itself was 'half-hearted'; and that important evidence was overlooked at the trial.

The West Yorkshire police have conducted an internal inquiry into the way in which the case was handled, but its findings have not yet been published. Earlier this summer, however, the Director of Public Prosecutions told her family that the investigating team from Humberside police had found evidence of misconduct against an (unnamed) officer in relation to the case; that the officer concerned had been transferred to another force; and that it was not proposed to bring a prosecution.

The case of Julie Stead raises serious issues about how the police, the courts and local authorities treat battered women. Ironically, as a consequence of Julie Stead's death, a row was sparked off between the local Women's Aid group and the local council, as a result of which a proposed refuge for battered women in Bradford has not gone ahead.

Julie (née Robinson) married Paul Stead in July 1973, when she was 16. He was 20. Their first child, Vicky, was born in 1974 and their second, Christopher, in 1978, after the marriage had broken up. It was a turbulent five-year marriage and, by all accounts, they were both too young for it. Julie is described as having been a quiet person, somewhat naive, and close to her family.

After her marriage Julie was lonely. She was working as a barmaid in a pub early in 1981 when she was introduced to Keith Ward by her younger sister Sharon. Ward, who is married, was having a relationship with Sharon at the time, but Sharon felt 'pestered' by him. Ward and Julie started going out together.

At first the Robinson family were unaware of any violence in their relationship. But when she was five months pregnant with Ward's child she showed her mother, Ellen, a large bruise on her thigh caused by Ward throwing a can of shaving foam at her. They then learned that her house locks had been broken twice and that he had kicked a hole in a door.

THE MAIN events in the rest of Julie's life with Keith Ward are as follows:

June 1982 Julie went into labour after being punched in the mouth and kicked in the stomach. She revealed the extent of Ward's violence to her family for the first time. She had received four or five black eyes and had complained to the police each time. She had seen the same officer three or four times at Laisterdyke police station, who (she said) told her that she was exaggerating and that he had hundreds of domestic cases to deal with.

July 1982 Julie asked the police for advice on how to keep Ward away. They suggested applying for an injunction, but in the following weeks she continued her relationship with him.

11 September 1982 After a row in a pub when she let someone sit on his chair, Ward punched Julie in the face with both fists, knocking her to the ground. Her mother hit Ward with her handbag, whereupon he grabbed her and held her against a wall. Stanley Robinson, Julie's elder brother, later hit Ward as a result of this incident. (When the assaults on Julie and her mother were later reported to the police, they said that they could take no action unless they prosecuted Stanley as well.)

4 October 1982 Julie asked her solicitor to apply for an injunction restraining Ward.

11 October 1982 A 'non-molestation' injunction was granted with effect until 11 March 1983. That same night Ward came to Julie's house and assaulted her. She was taken to hospital. The police charged Ward with assault occasioning actual bodily harm, but released him.

12 October 1982 Ward assaulted Julie again at her home in front of three witnesses: Sharon, a family friend and her brother's father-in-law. He punched a hole in the door to the bedroom, where she was hiding, held a glass to her throat and threatened to kill her. He also threatened to stab the father-in-law. Police charged him with causing criminal damage and released him, reportedly saying: 'We're not your bodyguards.'

23 October 1982 Police were told that Ward was hanging around Julie's house. He broke in during the evening, damaging fittings and furniture, including the TV set.

24 October 1982 Police came to Julie's house to investigate, but said that they could do nothing for lack of witnesses.

Late October 1982 Julie left home with her three children and was placed by a council housing officer in Craig Moor House at Holme Wood, Bradford. She was told that it was a 'hostel for battered wives'. (It is in fact an ordinary block of self-contained flats used for the homeless on the edge of a council estate, with an intercom entry system and a male warden on the premises.) She stayed there for about four months, allowing Ward access to his child. During this time, her family says, Ward assaulted her 'more than once'.

21 February 1983 Julie was assaulted particularly violently at Craig Moor, resulting in a bruised arm and swellings on her head.

22 February 1983 Julie's health visitor contacted the local Women's Aid group after this attack. The nearest refuge, run by Airedale Women's Aid in Keighley, was full. She went to Leeds, where the main hostel was closed, because of an outbreak of chickenpox. She was sent to the second, smaller refuge in Leeds, normally used for long stay families. It was overcrowded and no worker was on duty. Julie did not get on with any of the other women and stayed in her room all night without talking to anyone.

23 February 1983 The next morning the breakfast that Julie had prepared and left on a table was eaten by someone else. Upset, she returned to her mother in Bradford. Stanley took her to Laisterdyke police station, where she was advised to get a 'power of arrest' attached to her existing injunction against Ward. She was told that no action could be taken over the latest assault, because most visible bruising had gone. This visit was not recorded in the station register, but a note was made in the pocket notebook of the officer concerned.

7 March 1983 Julie's solicitor advised her that a further injunction would be applied for when the first ran out on 11 March. A legal aid application was made, stating that she was afraid for her own safety. That evening (Monday) she returned to her own house with her children. At 8.30 pm Ward arrived, saying that he wanted to talk about his son. Two friends were with Julie. Ward said the he would

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Julie Stead: born, 1957 married, 1973 killed, 1983 Verdict: manslaughter, boyfriend jailed for four years

not talk in front of strangers and took her to a pub and then to a curry house. They returned about midnight and her friends left.

8 March 1983 At 2.30 am screams from Julie's bedroom were heard by an Asian woman neighbour. (The police failed subsequently to interview this witness via an interpreter and no evidence from her was introduced at Ward's trial.) Julie was killed between 8 and 8.30 am. Her children heard Ward leaving the house shortly after and then discoverd their mother's body.

AT HIS TRIAL Ward claimed that he and Julie had spent 'the best night of their lives' together, but that in the morning she had taunted him that someone else was really the father of his 9-month-old child. He said that he then became angry, lost control, grabbed her by the throat, but did not mean to strangle her — and left the house not realising that she was dead.

Immediately after the trial Julie's family demanded an investigation into the police's handling of events leading up to her death, of their subsequent murder inquiry and of the handling of the prosecution of Ward. The police had not kept any proper record of Julie's complaints of assault. They did not attempt to get evidence from witnesses to Julie's last hours, such as the Asian neighbour or those in the curry house. The prosecution did not pursue the forensic evidence of bruises on Julie's chest and legs. The facts about Ward's previous violence and the assault charge and the existence of the injunction against Ward were not put before the judge or jury.

Ruth Bundy, the family's solicitor, claims that any such murder inquiry involving a black defendant would have been far more thorough and that any parallel history of past violence would certainly have come up in court.

> From my experience of a large volume of cases where the defendant is black, I cannot imagine such a half-hearted reaction from police officers dealing with someone accused of this behaviour.

Ms Bundy argues that, where a restraining injunction is broken in cases of domestic violence, the police should take the respondent straight back to the county court. Further, if a related criminal offence is committed while an injunction is in force, the person involved should be arrested and kept in custody pending trial — and certainly not release unconditionally.

Keith Ward was released unconditionally by the police on 11 October 1982, even though he was charged with an offence that broke the terms of the injunction granted that very same day. Julie's family is convinced that, even if Ward had been taken to court and then released on bail pending trial, he would at least have been deterred from assaulting her again. He repeatedly assaulted her afterwards, without any action being taken by the police.

Ellen Robinson thinks that this broke her daughter's spirit. After her visit to the police 11 days before she died she cried to her mother that she knew she would be killed. 'The police always treated it as a domestic matter. What's the use of an injunction, if it doesn't protect people? Isn't that what they're for?', she says.

AT THE TIME of Julie's death Airedale Women's Aid (AWA), whose refuge is in Keighley, 10 miles from Bradford but within the Bradford Council area, was in the process of buying a house as a refuge in Bradford itself, using a £20,000 grant under the Department of the Environment's Community Programme — which is adminstered by the local authority.

Members of AWA met Julie's family and agreed to make a statement after the trial, criticising the Council's policy of sending the homeless victims of domestic violence to Craig Moor House and representing it as a place of safety for battered wives. Then in June 1983 AWA sacked two of its workers for allegedly informing housing officials that AWA planned to 'sue' the council for Julie's death — in breach of a promise to her family that there would be no publicity about Craig Moor House before the trial.

This event coincided with a series of reports in the local *Keighley News*, claiming that 'Bickering Feminists' were delaying essential repairs at the Keighley refuge and that 'ideological clashes' between 'hard-line feminists' and 'feet on the ground' workers had led to the dismissals. The paper also (wrongly) claimed that the refuge was closing down. AWA was not given the right of reply. A month later — just after the group had signed a contract for a refuge in Bradford — the Council withdrew the £20,000 grant. It asserted that the group was being improperly run in a number of ways, all of which are strongly contested by AWA.

The Council then re-redirected the £20,000 grant to an new (unformed) Keighley Women's Aid group — which included the two dismissed workers. (It has a problem, because the AWA has simply refused to pay back its original £20,000 grant and intends to fight its case, if necessary, to the Ombudsman.)

Meanwhile Keighley has two refuges, but the much larger city of Bradford still has none. Battered women are still being sent to Craig Moor House and a Council spokesman said that he was satisfied that the local authority did all that it could for Julie Stead.

AWA is now trying to buy a house in Bradford without Council funding. The move is strongly supported by Julie's family. Her sister-in-law, Pat Robinson said:

> We thought after Julie died they would have welcomed a refuge in Bradford. Had there been one when whe was still alive, perhaps the story would have had a different ending. □

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Ralph Steadman

BELGRANO

COVER-UP CONTINUES

John Rentoul reports on the latest twists and turns

THE FOUR LABOUR members of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee will find themselves in a key role over the *Belgrano* affair when parliament reassembles on 22 October. There are four of them — Nigel Spearing, Dennis Canavan, Ian Mikardo and Mick Welsh — on the committee, seven Tories and no Alliance members. It was their questioning of Francis Pym, foreign secretary at the time of the Falklands War, on 11 June which led to the latest round of disclosures.

Because Pym equivocated when asked about changes in the rules of engagement (ROE), the committee then asked foreign office minister Baroness Young for a list of all changes in the rules of engagement. This request was passed to the Ministry of Defence and junior minster John Stanley's brief not to come clean with the committee was then leaked to Tam Dalyell.

The minutes of Pym's evidence to the committee also show that he was extremely defensive on the question of the Peruvian peace plan. The details of transatlantic messages about the peace plan have not yet been leaked from the Foreign Office, but the evidence continues to support Dalyell's original charge that Mrs Thatcher knew of the Peruvian peace plan before the *Belgrano* was sunk.

It has been suggested that the leaked Belgrano Papers have discredited this allegation, because they show that the War Cabinet decided to try to sink the Argentine aircraft carrier *Veinticinco de Mayo* two days earlier on 30 April before the Peruvian plan was even conceived. But given that the carrier managed to evade a British submarine, the peace plan still offered a possible way out of a real shooting war.

On Thames Television's *Daytime* programme this week it was revealed that US Secretary of State Haig believed that the British ambassador to Peru, Charles Wallace, was in on all the negotiations and was relaying them back to London. Haig told journalist Arthur Gavshon: 'The British Ambassador was in on every bit of the negotiations in Peru. He was right in with the President.' Gavshon asked if he thought Wallace was actually in the room: 'On a couple of occasions he was there. But if they, the British, were interested in a solution, why would it have been otherwise?'

Francis Pym's last-minute withdrawal from the *Daytime* programme confirms how worried the government is by the latest revelations. The reason the government won't 'come clean' on the *Belgrano* is because it was worried at the time, and still is, that the sinking may not have been justified in international law. Pym himself, to his credit, recorded his concern in a minute to Mrs Thatcher after the War Cabinet decided on 30 April to try to sink the aircraft carrier, and the same arguments applied with greater force, to the order for all-out attack on all Argentinian warships anywhere two days later. Unlike the declaration of the exclusion zone, which accompanied a package of ROE changes, the 30 April and 2 May changes were not announced to the Argentines.

At the 30 April meeting the Attorney General, Sir Michael Havers, attending in his capacity as legal adviser to the government, expressed doubt about the legality of not announcing the change in the rules of engagement which authorised the sinking of the carrier.

PYM AND HAVERS argued against the decision not to announce the intended attack on the carrier, and the Prime Minister was reminded of their reservations in the minute the next day. They were worried that the attack might not come within the terms of the public warning already given concerning Britain's right of self-defence. The argument, however, was not simply to do with international law, which is ambiguous on the matter, but also the fact that it would be difficult to justify the surprise sinking of a carrier with 2,000 people on board to international opinion.

When Pym declared on arrival in Washington on 1 May that 'no further military action is envisaged at the moment, except to keep the exclusion zone secure' he may have known already that the carrier had 'got away' and thought that his minute to Mrs Thatcher would

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Beryl's star turn

Though not among the North Sea giants, Mobil's newest offshore production platform isn't exactly sylph-like either. Twice as heavy as the Eiffel Tower, and with a profile that could, at best, be described as functional, Beryl B is hardly conventional star material.

Nevertheless, last year she performed like nothing short of a prima ballerina when her turn came to take centre stage in Britain's enduring North Sea spectacle.

On a misty day in May the 14,000 tonne steel jacket – 130 metres tall and 60 metres wide – slid from her tow-out barge and pirouetted down to the seabed. Then the artistry began. With tolerances of only ¼ of a degree, Beryl B delicately extended specially designed locating pins to lower herself with exacting precision over a pre-positioned drilling template. Illuminated by strobes and captured on television monitors, the whole performance took a suspenseful eight hours. And opened up a new era in offshore technology and techniques.

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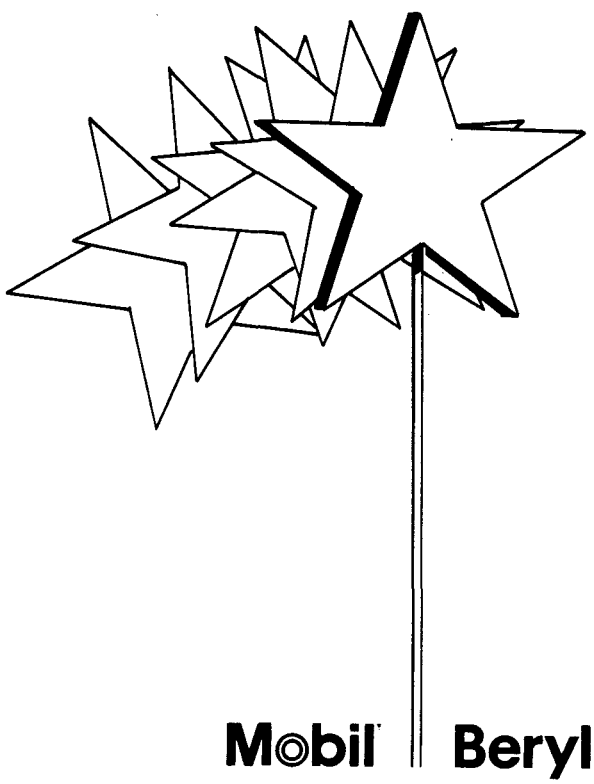
Beryl B's lightning virtuosity might not have brought an audience to its feet at Covent Garden. But then, as Mobil and its fellow venture participants can attest, the North Sea is hardly Swan Lake.



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delay any further escalation.

But it is clear from Lord Lewin, who represented the Chiefs of Staff on the War Cabinet, that military considerations overrode political and legal ones. He has said, whenever he has been asked, that he regarded the *Belgrano* and any other ships as a threat to the Task Force — just because they were at sea. As a military man, he wanted to put out of action a major Argentine ship and needed the advantage of surprise to carry out the attack.

Lewin's assertion reported in the *Guardian* this week, that the War Cabinet did not know the *Belgrano*'s course when it made that ROE change on 2 May only makes the government's position worse. It implies that, when the decision was taken, the War Cabinet felt that sinking the *Belgrano* was necessary, regardless of its course. But Defence minister John Nott *did* know the *Belgrano*'s course two days later, when he made a statement to the House of Commons; he ignored the advice of civil servants and chose to give the untrue justification that the *Belgrano* 'was closing on elements of our task force'.

Nott clearly thought it necessary to lie about the *Belgrano*'s course in order to justify the attack — reflecting the War Cabinet's acute awareness of the need to *appear* to be acting within the law at all times. Although they had accepted the military imperative on Sunday 2 May (and indeed on Monday 3 May, when the submarine *Conqueror* was ordered back to the scene of the attack to 'have a go' at *Belgrano*'s escorts), by Tuesday 4 May the doubts about what they had done returned. □

This England

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□On one occasion it was indicated to four Privy Councillors being introduced to the Queen that they were kneeling on the wrong side of the room. Not daring to rise to their feet, they crawled across to the other side on hands and knees knocking a book off a table as they did so. To their chagrin, the Queen looked 'blackly furious'. But she admitted later that she had been trying desperately not to laugh. — *Northampton Chronicle & Echo* (Mrs. S. A. Gameti)

□At a political meeting in Teignmouth Devon, Young Socialists held a collection for striking miners, Young Conservatives for working miners — and Young Liberals for. . .pit ponies. — *Sunday Mirror* (Joan Hope)

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NEIGHBOURLY NOSING

Christian Wolmar reports on a police experiment to use ordinary citizens as their 'eyes and ears' — under their command

'WE JUST WANT to come back after work and find our house as it was in the morning' said Gerry Martin, co-ordinator of the Ferry Lane Neighbourhood Watch in Tottenham, east London. Launched by the Metropolitan Police a year ago this month, the Neighbourhood Watch scheme is based on that common feeling of insecurity.

Neighbourhood Watch (NW) is a key part of the community policing initiative undertaken by the police to disguise a very real trend towards military policing. Like the Tory government's hijack of the word 'freedom', the use by the police of the word 'community' represents a clever incursion into the ideology of the Left. The idea of a community banding together, strengthening its ties and becoming less alienated is part of every Left struggle. Yet here the police are using it to gain active adherents to the law and order lobby — a traditional Tory domain.

For the middle classes in the suburbs and dormitory towns, Neighbourhood Watch is seen as a way of keeping nasty outsiders off their patch. But the idea has a wider appeal, too. As John Lea and Jock Young show in their recent book, *What is to be done about law and order?*, poorer people suffer the most from precisely the type of crimes — robbery, burglary, 'mugging' — which NW is designed to reduce. Because it is popular and partly successful, NW demands a political understanding and response from the Left which goes beyond 'non co-operation with the police'.

The scheme has snowballed. The Met claims that in May there were 390 operational schemes with a further 509 in the pipeline and outside London 22 police forces have set up NW schemes, with 11 more planning to do so. The figures are questionable, as they include any 'scheme' which has involved two or more meetings. Richard Clifton, chair of the Fontaine Area NW scheme in Streatham said: 'If the police figures are true, then it is the biggest community movement London has seen since the Jubilee celebrations'. Several purported schemes have been found to be defunct and Scotland Yard admits that they 'wait to be notified' by the scheme itself if it has folded. But the response has been strong, so much so that Scotland Yard is concerned at the extra police time being taken up with establishing schemes and the rate of growth has slowed.

The scheme's origins are American. Early last year, two Scotland Yard officers, Superintendent Turner and Detective Inspector Barker were packed off to the States to look at similar well-established schemes in four cities there. Their glowing report has formed the basis of the British NW. There are four elements:

- Property marking (with postcodes engraved or written with ultraviolet pens)
- Home security surveys (carried out by crime prevention officers)
- 'Community crime prevention and environmental awareness' (such as putting up NW signs campaigning for architectural improvements)
- Making people become the 'eyes and ears of the police'.

Schemes mostly cover several hundred households and are initiated either by local residents or the police. If the latter, a questionnaire about people's perception of crime and their willingness to be involved in a NW scheme is circulated and collected by the police. (The first version of the questionnaire was withdrawn as it was found to be too intrusive and the response rate was consequently low.) The police then arrange a meeting at which the crime prevention officer gives a talk and shows a Shaw Taylor video ('You can even engrave the wife' says Shaw gaily about a property marking scheme).

THE DETAILS of what participants in NW are supposed to do is left a bit vague. The police are aware that they're treading on dodgy ground. While most people would be happy that a potential thief is stopped from tampering with their car, they'd be none too pleased if their out of date tax disc is reported. While the police want the extra 'eyes and ears' and the information flow that goes with them, they normally discourage more active participation, such as car or foot patrols.

But Julian Scola, who is researching NW schemes, was stopped by a patrol in Cardiff and at least one scheme in London, Hindle House, Hackney, is regularly patrolling. John Tribe, martial arts expert and tenants' association chair, who organises the patrols in Hackney, has made two 'citizens arrests' and was hurt trying to make a third.

Attitudes to citizens patrols differ. Inspector Roy Wilkinson of Scotland Yard's community relations branch, which monitors and administers the NW scheme said: 'Patrols can lead to fights in which either party can get hurt or misinterpret perfectly legitmate activity

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Hackney Gazette

John Tribe: two citizen's arrests to his credit in Hackney

which can lead to trouble, so we're dead against them.' There is, however, no legal basis for stopping Tribe's wanderings with his walkie-talkie and is actively encouraged by the local Chief Superintendent, John Peck. 'John Tribe has been very effective in reducing the crime rate in the area. It's the sort of job that many firms employ watchmen or security guards to do. There's nothing wrong with citizen's arrests — in fact, it would be wrong if the police were the only ones carrying out arrests,' he said.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITY has definitely been stimulated by NW in prosperous estates such as Fontaine Area in Streatham. Started six months ago it is a 'model scheme' which has almost run through the gamut of activities open to NW: property marking sessions, arranging discounts with local locksmiths, producing a regular newsletter outlining details of local crime statistics. It has even adopted a formal constitution which directs that on dissolution remaining funds should go to police charities.

But police admit that the NW has proved difficult on council estates, which explains local willingness to encourage mavericks like John Tribe, whose support in the community is questionable. According to Chief Superintendent Peck: 'In certain areas, you get a majority of people who are possibly not honest, so we welcome any initiative there.' But NW can only be successful, in its own terms, as part of consensus policing. Police support for initiatives in areas where no such consensus exists is bound either to fail or lead to vigilantes, a concern expressed in a report on NW in July to Hackney's Police Committee.

What makes NW successful in Streatham is that it is based on the idea that crime is committed by outsiders, by a minority element which is not part of the community. It concentrates on crimes against property which, according to the police, surveys have shown that people most fear. But that very focus on property crimes is a source of opposition. Lorna Reith, chair of the Ferry Lane Tenants' Association, which was approached by the police to set up a scheme, said that the association was hesitant: 'We wanted to know exactly what was being offered. When we asked whether the police would help in cases of domestic violence, the Inspector laughed and said: 'My Aunt Nellie used to get beaten up every Friday and she loved it'.

The Ferry Lane story illustrates another aspect of concern over NW. While the tenants' association was discussing whether to establish a scheme, another group of tenants formed an NW action committee which the police promptly recognised. Now the relationship between the tenants' association and the home beat officer has deteriorated and the police have shown an inability to cope with a delicate community dispute, partly based along racial grounds. Although Gerry Martin of the NW claims that he has 'coloureds, Cypriots and Maltese' active in his group, Lorna Reith says that the majority of black people were reluctant to become involved in a police-run scheme like NW.

Even supporters of NW like Richard Clifton of Streatham have doubts about it: 'I felt we were being offered a little bit of democratic input into policing practice. But the police are unwilling to discuss even minor details of operational criteria.' And they have even put the dampers on Clifton's idea of setting up a network of NW schemes to exchange information and establish a code of practice.

Indeed, input on operational decisions is not welcome. Inspector Wilkinson's view was: 'We're the only ones who know the whole picture in a particular district and can work out police priorities.' On the wider issue of accountability, NW has none of the characteristics of the US systems on which it was based. As a report to Camden's police sub-committee put it, NW 'was part of a wholesale reorganisation of the Detroit Police Department after the election of the city's first black mayor on a strong police reform platform.' The police's willingness to ignore existing community organisations such as at Ferry Lane and its refusal to listen to them as at Fontaine Area illustrate the shallowness of what NW offers. □

POLITICS

SCOTS NATS MOVE LEFT

Rob Edwards describes how the SNP's centre of gravity is shifting to pragmatism

'THE HEATHER is smouldering' is how Winnie Ewing, MEP, characterised the new mood of optimism that is supposed to be abroad within the Scottish National Party (SNP) after its 50th annual conference in Inverness last week.

Still basking in the glory of her remarkable victory in the European elections, she won two standing ovations from delegates and was re-elected as one of the party's vice-presidents. To the uninitiated observer, she must have looked like the conference's darling, the embodiment of the SNP's reviving hopes.

But in the SNP things are not always as simple as they seem. In private session delegates delivered her a severe personal rebuff by voting to forbid any member of the European Parliament from becoming a British MP — precisely what she attempted to do last year. On the political front, Winnie Ewing's brand of right-wing fundamentalist nationalism lost all the major policy battles. The most important result of events in Inverness is that the SNP has shifted significantly to the left.

In spite of the rancorous division over the now-outlawed socialist '79 Group', the SNP's centre of gravity has been moving perceptibly leftwards in recent years. But the scale of the Left's victory in Inverness surprised its supporters and shocked its opponents. Party pundits point out that there seem to have been about 30 more delegates than last year prepared to support left-wing motions and candidates — just enough to swing the conference on the key issues.

The political geography of the SNP is quite distinct from that of other parties. The most obvious divide is not over policy but tactics: between the gradualists — who tend to be young, left-wing and strong supporters of devolutionary measures — and the traditionalists — the old guard who argue passionately for 'independence, nothing less'. So, unlike in the Labour Party, it is the Left that stresses virtues of pragmatism and the Right which asserts the primacy of principle.

The Left's crucial victory was a mere eight-vote margin (246 to 238) in favour of an elected constitutional convention to determine how Scotland should be governed. This tactic would be used if there was still a Conservative government at Westminster after the next general election to embarrass the Labour and Alliance parties in Scotland. A motion committing the SNP to co-operate with the all-party Campaign for a Scottish Assembly was passed by a similarly narrow margin.

In the elections for office holders and executive members, three former members of the '79 Group' gained places, probably enough to give the Left a working majority on most issues. Jim Mitchell ousted the maverick right-

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winger Gordon Murray as vice-chairman responsible for local government; while Jim Sillars, newly returned from political exile in Saudi Arabia, and Kenny MacAskill both won places on the executive.

The conference voted overwhelmingly to give its 'full support' to the miners' strike. It committed the SNP to drawing up a radical 'Workers' Charter' strengthening trade union rights and repealing the Tories' employment legislation; and it agreed to a 'regeneration of the Scottish economy led by the public sector'. Delegates also backed a major policy statement on women's rights and democratic self-government for the Falkland Islanders in association with the United Nations.

ON A COUPLE of issues the conference did not go as far as some delegates wished. A series of constitutional amendments attempting to commit the SNP to a Scottish republic without the Queen as head of state were rejected by a majority of two to one in private session. And a motion aiming to turn the Highlands and Islands Development Board into a kind of mini-parliament responsible for governing the north was remitted back.

'We are now rebuilding a coalition between the centre and the left' said Alex Salmond, one of the party's prominent left-wing strategists. He is confident that the Left's gains will be consolidated at next year's conference in Paisley. He points out that Labour's strong showing in recent opinion polls (up to 50 per cent support according to one) makes it easier to convince SNP activists that the aim should be to go for the socialist vote — especially the 15 per cent of the electorate who the polls indicate are in favour of independence, but vote Labour.

The Left, though, still has to prove that its policies can win elections. The SNP's electoral successes earlier this year — winning control of Angus District Council and the quadrupling of Winnie Ewing's majority in the Highlands and Islands Euro-seat — were certainly not achieved by appeals to socialist values. The SNP is relatively strong in the right-wing rural areas, but it is in the Labour-dominated industrial heartland where it has still to make an impact.

Party officials insist that there are some hopeful straws in the wind. Membership is said to have increased by 2-3000 since last year's low of 20,000; and party finances are in a more healthy state (a modest £150 surplus instead of a £25,000 deficit). Much is expected of this autumn's recruitment campaign.

But to make an important electoral breakthrough the SNP will have to avoid some familiar pitfalls. For all their flaws, Westminster rule and the English cannot be blamed for everything. SNP leaders cannot go on sounding like bad-tempered children, upset at having been deprived of their rightful share of sweeties. Above all, vacuous appeals to 'Scottish policies' and 'Scottish values', while they may help unit conferences, cannot win many seats.

The Inverness conference showed that these kind of home truths are being recognised by a growing proportion of SNP activists. But whether this awareness can be translated into effective campaigning and electoral victories remains to be seen. If it cannot, the SNP will be condemned, in the words of one rather cruel observer, to 'farting against a hurricane'. □

It's our job to be a nuisance

John Lloyd

THE MEDIA got Arthur Scargill and Ian MacGregor to agree last week. At a 'secret' meeting in a North Yorkshire hotel, filmed by four TV channels, snapped by 20 photographers and noted by 30 reporters, these two legendary figures agreed the media was a pest.

So it had been. The two teams of negotiators had left the besieged Edinburgh hotel for a bit of peace at the Monk Fryston Hotel near Selby, only to find that the press had either tailed them there or double-guessed them. The hotel had an open gallery above the reception area across which the negotiators had to walk as they shuttled between rooms: each time they did, the TV sun guns caught them as if they were scaling the Berlin Wall.

There was an (unconfirmed) report, firmly believed by union and Board, that a camera crew had tried to effect an entry into the negotiating area through a women's toilet — while a woman was in it. So, after they told the press and broadcasters what they thought of them (Scargill: 'Media harassment' — MacGregor: 'unfortunate'), they drove off (tailed by the press) to a rope factory to conduct their ultimately fruitless deliberations behind police lines.

When does enthusiastic reporting/filming end and harassment begin? There *is* no line — it is where the object of the reporting complains of being harassed — and has the ability to stop it. Like most newspaper reporters, I can't stand TV equipment jostling me out of place on doorsteps and at press conferences — and get impatient with the me-first, blunderbuss questions of the TV and radio networks. But I want to see or hear the results of their pushiness, and so do Scargill and MacGregor.

So I'm not sure what it would be desirable to do about the media's physical manifestations, unlovely as they are. But it's only one form of intervention: at another level, media interference is merely the free play of opinion and political view. Mineworkers' Union and Coal Board, government and opposition parties, TUC and industry groups compete for and get attention; commentators, from Paul Foot through Jimmy Reid to Paul Johnson, deserve the space they get, if (as these do) they deploy clearly partisan positions to sharpen the debate.

Both sides object to the 'unfairness' of the commentators who are hostile to them. Of course they are unfair: if fairness can be achieved in journalism, it must be at the expense of championing a cause. Since that is precisely what the main protagonists are doing — the Board, the primacy of the market; the union, planned and protected production — a largely responsive trade like journalism will follow suit.

Meanwhile, on the Street (and in the studios) of Shame, we have other problems. The business of reporting the strike is not a simple matter. For the TV people (and this has been TV's strike) the televisuability of the happenings on the ground, especially the picket line battles, has been a gift. So, too, has been the black and white quality of Arthur Scargill's public persona: an image with clear edges, no equivocation, a charismatic stump orator made for an electronic age. Arthur, as Alastair Hetherington made clear during the Edinburgh TV festival, gets his fair share and more of TV time: but is it *fair*, all the same?

Again, of course not. TV images are not balanced, even if a shot of a picket punching a policeman were counterposed with the exact same length of footage of a policeman punching a picket. That even-handedness is probably not how it was: and anyway, who knows? Certainly not the snatch squads of cameramen and reporters who have to be 'putting the stuff over' within a very few hours of getting there. More importantly, the best images are not always the most important events: nor are they the summit meetings whose details leak out into the press. They are often the sum of the private decisions made by thousands, or hundreds of thousands, of miners, their families and — now especially — other trade unionists faced with calls for support. How are these to be reported and filmed, except through the Yes/No interludes of hopelessly contradictory polls?

In the popular end of the Street, the urge to cross the line between report/comment and meddling proved too much for Mr Robert Maxwell, with an Ego as Big as the Ritz and a paper to push it in. Maxwell's 'peace plan' was a debacle which deepened distrust: no doubt it got him circulation.

If the unpopular end of the market has anything to be ashamed of, it is less bias than conservatism (small c). Labour reporting is, in the UK press, its own specialism, uniquely powerful among the world's press. With a 40-year history, it has acquired some traditions which can make it stiff: a strike like this one, breaking the rules, throwing up new formations, can at times by-pass reflexes trained to respond to other stimula.

All of this makes it terribly unfair: no wonder Arthur and Ian got sore. But the media *can't* be fair: it's a raucous, competing cacophony of overheated opinions, half-baked judgments and partial truths — and that's the best of it. There should be more of it, especially on the underpopulated Left: but that would just make it more evenly unfair. □

John Lloyd is Industrial Editor of the Financial Times.

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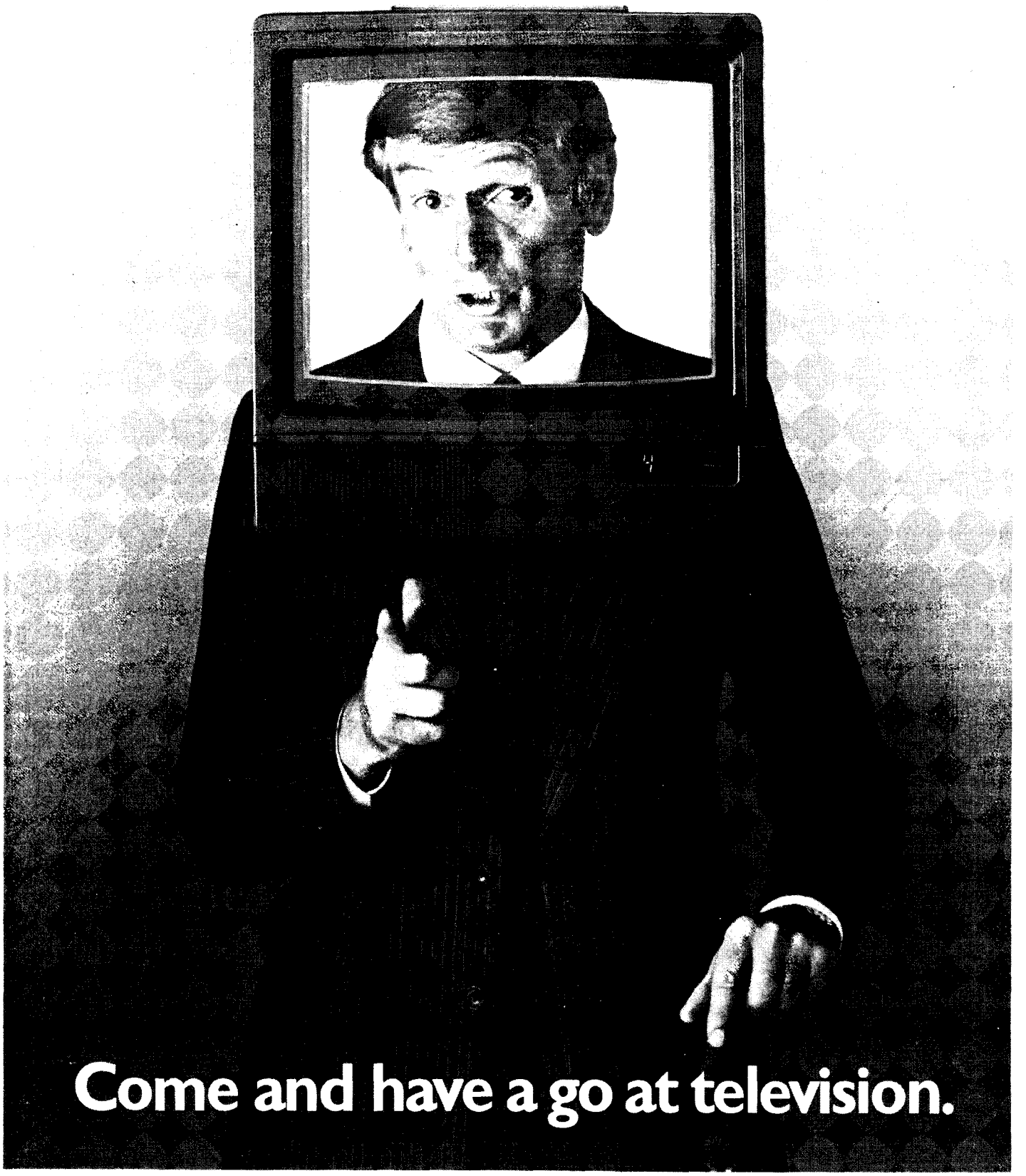

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DIARY

I knew the summer was over when I read Peter Jenkins saying that his Christmas dinner might be spoilt by the miners' strike. As the conflict opened he positively chortled at the prospect of the miners' struggle ('a dying spasm') being crushed in short order, and concluded his *Guardian* column with an immortal phrase: 'The age of socialism like the age of chivalry has passed'. Personally, I had thought both of them were quite some way in the future. It now seems, however, that as the brandy casts its ghostly blue light over the Christmas pudding it will still symbolize the flickering possibility of a more happy and egalitarian society. If only for the mere moment, of course, before we plunge our teeth into the sticky substance. It's true, though, that in a way the miners *are* on strike for the past. Which is one reason for the strength of their support.

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The way this has held up despite the output from Nottinghamshire, the absence of a ballot and the media bias is quite remarkable. Why does Alastair Hetherington think that coverage of the strike has been fair? He did an excellent analysis of Falklands coverage and concluded that what was wrong was not that the media didn't 'cover' the Argentine side, but that it failed to publicise the *causes* of the conflict. The same argument applies with equal force today. Given that Thatcher decided early on to try to break the miners; given that she appointed MacGregor for this purpose; given that she regards Scargill as a domestic Galtieri against whom she commands hostilities; given all these things, the dispute should be called 'Thatcher's coal strike', rather than 'the miners' strike'. If it was, say even equally, so referred to, this would change its entire media projection.

So how could a fair-minded liberal professor and one time editor of the *Guardian* state that the strike was simply 'contrived' by Scargill alone — especially when it began as an unofficial action in Yorkshire and that he'd be lynched if he sold out? One answer is the America connection. Perhaps Hetherington was critical of the Falklands, just as he was of Suez, not for ethical reasons but because it endangered the alliance with Washington. For when it came to Vietnam he shifted the *Guardian* behind the United States as America escalated its horrific intervention, such was his objectivity. Today he backs MacGregor, who despite all Scargill's verbal agility has come out with the best quote of the conflict so far: 'I don't vote here, I vote in Florida'.

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I predict that the nature of American influence in Britain will be the subject of increasing argument over the next few years. A thought excited by reading Cameron Watt's *Succeeding John Bull*. (Although I must admit that this has been interrupted by an advance copy of Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus* — I became transfixed by the fabulous fortunes of Sevvers. It ought to win the Booker Prize and almost certainly will not.) Watt ruminates on the way that the US took over the world from the UK. He thinks that the elite oligarchies of Europe will now pull away from American monarchical-populism, despite the influence of what he calls, aptly enough, the 'transnational Atlantic clerisy'. I suppose their leading representative here must be Dr David Kennedy-clone Owen, whose latest glorification of ambition could be straight from Camelot. He told the SDP conference: 'I am interested in only one thing — votes, influence and power'. There is no guff here about principles, or people. What does he want to *do* with 'power'? It's obvious. He wants it so that people will say, 'Gosh, Owen's powerful'. This naked US-style pursuit of office distinguishes him from such predecessors as Attlee, Wilson and Callaghan. Compared to them David Owen will be the first King to celebrate the fact that he has no clothes.

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This is why the SDP alliance with the Liberals will never be a happy one. For if the Liberals lack body they have often sported the finest colours. Or, to put it with less levity, social democracy is about building a strong state capable of intervention for the 'good' of the whole country. It has always been patrician and

patronising (tough but tender). By contrast the Liberal Party stands for authentic decentralisation, if it stands for anything. Its weakness may stem from the fact that it represents no particular interests. But its strength lies in its almost libertarian appeal to individuals, even to eccentricity — an appeal quite inimical to the pursuit of State power for its own sake.

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Which brings me back to Peter Jenkins. I've followed his column with a more interested eye since I began this diary in February, and I now admire him above all others for his seamless inconsistency. Last week he launched a savage attack on Thatcher for packing her Cabinets with an entourage so cretinous as to lack any independent authority. Yet without drawing breath he lauds David Owen who seeks an even more crushing domination. You, the ordinary or even extraordinary reader, might regard it as backhanded to compliment Peter Jenkins for contrariness. But most of us condemned to the privilege of a regular deadline are all too aware of how the stitches hang out as we try to patch together 'a point of view'. Besides, to be consistent, let alone correct, is hard work and makes for dull prose.

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At least that's what I feel as I return from paternity leave to my word-box to bang out 7,000 characters (it counts them automatically as I go along). Even I am relieved that computers are still absolutely useless when it comes to babies. Here, the latest device is a welcome return to well attested traditions: the Lullababy made by Lullababy of Leominster. Since seeing them in action in the Far East, I've always been convinced that cradles should rock by being hung from the ceiling. The Lullababy is attached to a powerful spring, which gives it a vertical rock as well, and it needs only one screw hole (once, that is, you've found the ceiling joist!). Although the design still needs improvement, it entertains tiny junior, looks lovely and it can *even* lull the little one to sleep.

Islander

ROGER WODDIS

Oh, Henry!

(A Loyal Tribute, written pending the appointment of the next Poet Laureate)

Oh, golden day! Oh, paeans of joy!
Now let a myriad flags unfurl!
The nation is blessed with a baby boy!
(Though millions would have preferred a girl).

What care we if the killjoys wince?
The bells ring out as the champagne flows
And we wonder whether the new-born Prince
Has his father's ears or his mother's nose.

Go well, Prince Harry! Be hale, Prince Hal!
A brimming toast to the third in line!
Now little Willie can boast a pal
And one not even the stars outshine!

God save your Mum and your doting Dad,
And let no tyrant their place usurp!
Good fortune follow you, lovely lad,
With the media mad for your every burp.

Will it be cricket or squash or darts
That proves you fit for your future role?
Be sure your presence will warm the hearts
Of your humble subjects who draw the dole.

Long live love and the silver spoon,
The Unicorn and the rampant Lion!
Oh, may there be another one soon,
And prithee, let him be called Prince Brian!

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WANTED: MEN ENJOYING POWER

The official Italian parliamentary commission investigating the P2 masonic lodge has now reported. Donald Sassoon comments on the way it has illuminated the network of establishment conspiracies that constitute Italian politics and society

NO WOMAN has ever been on an Italian parliamentary commission of enquiry until Tina Anselmi became the president of one established to investigate the secret masonic lodge P2. A good choice: she is a high ranking member of the Italian Christian Democratic Party, a good and honest catholic from the Venetia region and, being a woman, could not have been a mason: the 'brothers' have no sisters.

The Anselmi commission was set up on 15 June 1981 soon after the discovery of a list containing the names of the members of the Propaganda 2 (P2). In July this year the commission produced a shattering report which constitutes a thorough indictment of Italy's ruling class. It confirmed that the list was authentic and revealed that it contains 962 names, 422 of whom are public servants.

The best known is Pietro Longo, leader of the pro-American and anti-communist Italian Social Democratic Party. Longo had to resign from his position as Budget Minister, but kept the leadership of his party. The list also contains the names of leading figures in the Socialist, Christian Democratic and Republican parties — in short all the parties which have dominated Italy's coalitions for the past twenty years.

The commission established that the higher echelons of the Treasury, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Trade had been penetrated. Even more thorough was the penetration of the secret services and the armed forces. Of the 169 high ranking officers involved, 111 have been 'cleared' by an internal enquiry. The former head of the Joint Chief of Staff was also cleared, having given his 'word of honour' that he had nothing to do with the P2. Of the 16 judges involved, 13 were subjected to disciplinary proceedings; of these two were expelled, seven demoted and four cleared.

The government has recently decided not to proceed against any of the middle ranking state functionaries. The top generals had already resigned. The government seems to think that the case is closed, but everyone knows that this show will run and run, because the Anselmi commission had only began to scratch the surface of a scandal which has the peculiarity of being connected to virtually every major unsavoury aspect in the life of the Italian republic: attempted coups, political assassinations, right-wing and left-wing terrorism, the mafia. Nor is this confined to Italy. There are important Latin American and US connections.

THE ANSELMI commission tried to piece together the career of the P2's mysterious leader, Licio Gelli, who escaped to Switzerland, was arrested by the authorities and escaped again to South America where he is still presumed to be. In 1943 Gelli was actively co-operating with the SS in Italy. Shortly afterwards, as a precautionary measure, he also helped the partisans. Thanks to this 'insurance' he was cleared of fascist activities after the war and, it is alleged, became a Cominform agent. A document proving his involvement with Eastern European agents was used by the Italian secret services to blackmail Gelli into becoming one of their agents in 1950.

Little is known of his activities until 1963: he was, for a period, in Argentina where he established contacts with fascist and Nazi exiles as well as with the Argentinian freemasonry. Back in Italy he became a businessman, joined the freemasons officially in 1963, and in 1966 entered the secret lodge Propaganda 2 (P2).

Since then and until 1975 Gelli was directly involved in subversion. The Anselmi report maintains that Gelli was connected with the death of left-wing publisher Giangiacomo Feltrinelli in 1971 and with the founding of the Red Brigades. While maintaining his contacts with 'left' terrorism, Gelli was taking part in the organisation of an attempted right-wing coup d'état. This was planned for the beginning of December 1970 under the leadership of Prince Valerio Borghese, a 'hero' of the Fascist Republic of Salò.

The attempted coup was very badly organised and ended up as authentic farce: apparently it was called off at the last minute because it was raining heavily. Gelli, who was behind it and who probably called it off, had a precise strategic aim: to link up organisations of the far right with sections of the military establishment and to put pressure on members of the political elite so as to obtain their consent

Wanted: P2 boss and escaped prisoner Licio Gelli, as the police believe he now looks

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for a 'strong state'. The secret operations were part of that project; they were aimed at destabilizing Italian democracy by terrorism, to pave the way for a call for a 'strong state'.

By 1975 Gelli realised that the strategy was not working. Instead of veering to the right, the country had moved to the left as evidenced by the success of the Italian Communist Party in the 1975 and 1976 elections and the formation in 1976 of a government supported by the PCI. After 1975 Gelli was no longer directly involved in terrorist activities. By then he was too well known to establish low level contacts and his organisation had successfully penetrated the military, political and financial establishments.

GELLI'S SPHERE of activity was not purely Italian. His contacts with Argentina had remained excellent. In November 1972 he personally chartered the plane which brought Peron back to Argentina and accompanied him. His reward was the post of commercial counsellor at the Argentinian Embassy in Rome. He was thus able to control the whole of Italo-Argentinian trade and particularly the arms trade.

His contacts with the Italian military establishment came in handy; he was praised officially by the former head of the Argentinian navy, Admiral Emilio Edoardo Massera, for having 'helped us to tell the truth about the [Falklands] war'. According to the weekly *L'Espresso*, Gelli tried to obtain further Exocet missiles for Argentina via Peru. To do so he used the Banco Andino of Lima. This bank belongs to the Banco Ambrosiano whose boss, Roberto Calvi, also a member of the P2, was found hanging from Blackfriars Bridge a few days after the end of the war.

Gelli's international contacts are not limited to Latin America. Thanks to Michele Sindona, Calvi's predecessor as the Vatican's banker, he was in touch with the American freemasons and in particular with Governor John Connolly and David Kennedy, who both served as Treasury Secretary under Nixon. Undoubtedly Gelli could move in influential North American circles; for example, he was personally invited to the inauguration of both President Carter and President Reagan.

Here we are obviously entering a mysterious world which is still well hidden from public scrutiny. It is clear that Gelli was at the top of a complex structure, of a pyramid. Over Gelli, however, there is another upturned pyramid of which little is known. Gelli was probably no more than the linchpin between the lower and the upper pyramid.

What is known is that much of Italian public life has been 'managed' by secret associations: the mafia, the freemasons, the secret services, the special affairs division of the Interior Ministry, the CIA. Gelli's 'brilliant' idea (or perhaps his bosses') was to construct a secret sect like a holding company: a complex system of overlapping and criss-crossed shareholding ensures, if not control, at least a finger in every pie.

What we do not know are the names of all the shareholders of this super-party, the members of this upside down pyramid. What has been established is the network of companies connected to the P2. There is Michele Sindona and hence the Sicilian and American mafia, not to speak of the Vatican. There is General Miceli, former head of the secret services, later high ranking member of the neo-fascist party, acting as a *trait d'union* between the Italian secret services and the US and recipient — via the American ambassador in Rome — of vast sums for the purposes of 'combatting communism'.

YET THE P2 is not a simple organisation of criminals, or just another mafia. It is the product of a political system which has been constructed in the last 40 years by Italy's Christian Democrats, it is the result of the abnormal growth of power outside the formal institutional system and the democratic framework. What the scandal has brought out is a dual level of power: a formal 'democratic' system with elections, parliament, competing political parties and a hidden level which has its own institutional forms: mafia and terrorism, secret services and masonic infiltration.

As long as the Christian Democrats could rule sovereign — as in the 1950s and 60s — conflicts within the hidden level could be subsumed within it, but in the late 1960s and 70s the Christian Democrats (DC) encountered a series of defeats: the student revolt of 1968, the trade union upsurge of 1969, the divorce referendum of 1974 (which showed that Italian women were breaking with traditional catholicism), the electoral growth of the Italian Communists, the PCI. As new and old political subjects demanded radical changes the crisis of the DC, Italy's leading party, escalated. It could no longer absorb all conflicts within itself. The secret lobbies and the special interests which had the DC as their main reference point acquired a degree of autonomy. Huge areas of the decision-making process were shifted to the hidden sector.

It is in this period that powerful men in the ruling coalition parties, leading members of the armed forces, of the financial establishments, powerful publishers, bankers came to rely increasingly on the secret networks in order to strengthen their power, defeat their rivals, promote their careers. These powerful men are without exception 'friends of the West'. Their anti-communism has little to do with a desire to protect democracy against the evils of Stalinism or the risks of the gulag and has everything to do with the necessity to protect their network of clienteles and special interests.

The Italian ruling class thus became the terrain for an authentic civil war between rival and competing interests held together by their common need for secrecy and their fear of Italian communism. The P2 is an organising network, it is not *the* Italian conspiracy. It cuts across diverse conspiracies. There are no superplots and there is, in all likelihood, no Mr Big at the top, no supreme puppeteer holding all the strings. There are many Mr Bigs and many puppeteers.

Unlike Britain, Italy does not have a real 'establishment' with a hard bedrock of traditions, established initiation rituals (public schools, the professions) and assured continuity. The factionalism and bitter infighting of its political class makes the preservation of secrets an arduous task. Thus there is room for an organisation such as the P2. Traditional freemasonry simply provided both a context for its secretive growth and a model of organisation.

The story of the P2 has unique Italian aspects, but also holds wider implications. It reveals in its extreme forms some of the problems facing theories of democracy in their liberal and socialist/labour versions. If democracy is a system of rules and procedures which define the parameters within which political action can take place, what happens when alongside this system there is another one whose rules are mysterious, its procedures unknown, its power immense and which is able to protect itself against the formal institutions of democracy by a wall of secrecy? This is the dangerous side of extra-parliamentary activity. While the extra-parliamentary actions of the Left, whether legal or illegal, whether peaceful or violent, are all visible and can be seen (to the extent of literally being seen on television) whenever they take place. The extra-parliamentary manoeuvres of the Right, however, carefully avoid the revealing glare of the camera. □

USA

A LEADER WITH NO CHEER

Claudia Wright on the campaign trail with the depressed and deflated Mondale team

Washington

Endocrinologists at the National Institute of Mental Health, near Washington, have identified a syndrome they call SAD — Seasonal Affective Disorder — which comes on at this time of the year. The symptoms are feelings of lethargy, weariness, and depression. The cause is the loss of summer daylight, which inhibits the pineal gland from producing a hormone called melatonin. The more hours of darkness there are with the onset of autumn, the less melatonin is secreted into the body and, apparently, the more depressed we feel. Judging by Walter Mondale's recent physical appearance, his pineal gland is not being exposed to any daylight at all. His face is drawn, his voice is straining with fatigue and his mental concentration looked shot as he fumbled several economic presentations last week. For hormonal as well as political reasons, the Democratic candidate might as well take a long holiday in the sun. For the more he campaigns, the worse his standing in the polls becomes. Even Geraldine Ferraro's contribution to the ticket and her advantage over Vice-President Bush appear to have evaporated since the Republican Convention.

No 'new ideas'

Mondale is in reality a more decent, genuine, compassionate person than Carter and Kennedy were — they merely seemed to be those things in public. When Mondale's advance men recently set up a television event in which the candidate was supposed to shake hands with crowds of workers changing shift at

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a paper plant, they made a terrible mistake — they brought Mondale to the factory gate ten minutes too late. Most of the workers had gone. Carter and Kennedy would have fired the advance team, but Mondale thinks that to err is human. He made a minor reshuffle of the jobs at the head of his staff and took the failure on himself. The print journalists and cameramen covering the event felt sorry for him and the media editors protected the campaign from embarrassment by not mentioning it.

It is obvious from the out-takes of television coverage of Mondale's performances that the networks and major newspapers are covering up for his failures. His punch lines read better than they sound and sound better on radio than on television, because they are delivered with a downcast demeanour and in a high-pitched monotone which alienate even those audiences that have been primed with cheer-leaders, balloons and badges.

It is not just the mode of Mondale's delivery that is failing. Mondale's presentation of a deficit-reducing budget turned out to be the same exercise in complex tax arithmetic and economic growth projections that failed to be convincing when Carter offered them in 1980. What sort of an alternative can Mondale imagine he is offering with a tax increase on individual incomes that would be less than 2 per cent at the $50,000 level, less than 8 per cent at $100,000? Why bother to offer a new budget to the high-unemployment States if there are no new job creation funds?

A similar lack of an alternative policy — of 'new ideas', to revive the cant phrase of Gary Hart's campaign — is evident in Mondale's attempt to upstage the President's 28 September meeting with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, by arranging his own meeting the day before. In announcing he would be tough on the Russian, Mondale has eliminated whatever criticism he might subsequently want to make of the President's performance. By meeting with Gromyko, Mondale exposed himself to the same charge of opportunism he might have stuck to the President.

It is true that President Reagan is insulated from all but the most carefully primed audiences. But for that he is being punished by the press which has criticised his isolation and amplified whatever gaffes the President can be caught making. Still, it is wishful thinking for the Mondale staff to imagine their man will be able to score a dramatic gain from the two October debates. In television terms, Mondale already looks such a beaten man that he couldn't outpoint Reagan, even if the President forgets the name of his own Vice-President, calls the B-1 a vitamin, or claims the Pope is President of Poland.

Religious dimension

In a campaign in which so little is being made of the real issues, there was bound to be much ado about nothing. Not for many years has there been a sillier debate on the role religious authority plays in politics. The cant has been evenly matched from both sides.

Much of the Reverend Jesse Jackson's campaign to register and turn out black Democratic voters has depended on the network of Southern Baptist Churches. So the

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Republicans were certain to turn to the white Evangelical Churches for their countermove. So far it appears that increased black voter registration has been equalled, if not exceeded, by the white effort. The only slip-up in the Republican operation has been the offence some of the white fundamentalists have caused pro-Reagan Jews by referring to God as if he were a Christian, and by treating the New Testament as if it were all there was to the Bible. The Jewish community has been relatively charitable about this — much more than they were towards Reverend Jackson.

The President's pitch for support from the Roman Catholic hierarchy was a predictable retort to Ferraro's appeal to the Catholic constituencies of the northeast. The prelates who have been smarting from defeats within the National Conference of Bishops on the nuclear deterrence issue and on US policy towards Central America were only too happy to line up on the White House side. It is worth noting, however, that neither Ferraro nor Democratic Catholics, like New York Governor Mario Cuomo, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, or Senator Edward Kennedy, have had the gumption to challenge the churchmen and 'pro-life' campaigners who call abortion murder, but defend the slaughter in El Salvador. Nor has any Democrat made the obvious political observation — never before has an Administration intervened so directly in Vatican affairs and through such highly placed Catholics as William Clark, Alexander Haig, Vernon Walters and William Wilson (one of Reagan's old friends and the US Ambassador to the Vatican) helped to prevent exposure of the financial scandals surrounding the Vatican bank and the involvement of corrupt American churchmen in its affairs. □

PHILIPPINES

AQUINO'S LEGACY

Washington is worried at the extent of unrest in the Philippines, reports Nigel Cross

> The rule of law truly abides in our country today. And in spite of recent major challenges to our internal security and to public order, the ship of democratic and constitutional government moves proudly onwards. — *President Ferdinand Marcos addressing the Philippine Constabulary, 8 August.*

A YEAR AFTER the assassination of opposition leader Benigno Aquino at Manila airport, Elmer Dacillo was minding his own meagre business in a country market-place on the southern island of Mindanao, when he was shot dead. His funeral at Pagadian Cathedral on 18 August was the occasion of an angry but orderly demonstration. Hundreds of mourners, some wearing masks to avoid identification, marched silently behind Dacillo's coffin carrying anti-government placards and banners. It may not have been as spectacular as the carefully planned Aquino rally in Manila three days later, but as an example of the political mood in a far-flung provincial town, it was just as instructive.

Dacillo's friends and neighbours believe he was killed on suspicion of being a supporter of the New People's Army (NPA), the Marxist guerrillas whose activities the government alternately plays down and anguishes over. That summary executions of suspected NPA sympathisers are commonplace is confirmed by Task Force Detainees, a Church-backed human-rights organisation which has recorded an average of four to five such killings a week. Church workers, labour organisers and human-rights activists have been listed among the victims.

Because the armed forces are, in theory, subject to military discipline, their more irregular activities are often delegated to civilian volunteers. It is assumed that Dacillo was murdered by members of the Civil Home Defence Force (CHDF). The CHDF is a nationwide paramilitary organisation, whose members (usually unmarried men) are issued with weapons and told to guard their towns and villages against communist subversion. Some CHDF men may be concerned and conservative citizens, but many are blamed for random killings, daylight robbery and general thuggery. CHDF recruits include members of Tadtad, a fanatical religious sect who ritually slash their victims.

The island of Mindanao has never been exactly peaceful. Spanish attempts to subjugate the Muslim population — the Bangsa Moro people — lasted three centuries. The Muslims are now in a minority, but since 1946 they have been fighting for secession for the island from the rest of the country. Military action in the region intensified during the 1970s and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) claims some 90,000 Muslims were killed in what amounted to a genocidal war. The latest government tactic is to prise the MNLF from an informal alliance with the NPA, by promising an amnesty, jobs for 'rebel returnees' and increased development aid in Muslim areas.

No such offer has been made to the NPA which appears to control much of rural Mindanao and is also organising in the cities. NPA 'control' amounts to providing an alternative government, including rudimentary health care, agricultural assistance, education, propaganda and justice. Justice is rough and simple. Penalties range from banishment to execution. Landlords and thieves are usually given notice to mend their ways. Informers and rapists tend to be shot without ceremony. 'Sparrow' units of the NPA assassinate official targets — policemen, soldiers, mayors. The rural poor in NPA areas benefit from these 'Robin Hood' methods. But those who live on the margins, along roads leading to barracks and militarized towns, are less happy. Like Elmer Dacillo, they make easy targets for the CHDF.

Although Mindanao has a reputation as a guerrilla stronghold and is the only region that the civil law seems to have abandoned completely to the military, the NPA is stepping up its activity throughout the Philippines. According to the Defence Minister, Juan Ponce Enrile, who estimates the size of the NPA at around 5,000, 'if the NPA really does gain the support and sympathy of the Philippine people, it could be very strong'. The United States Embassy puts the NPA strength at 15,000, and believes that 17 per cent of the country is under NPA control. The NPA claims to have 20,000 men and women fighting in 53 out of 72 provinces with the support of millions of sympathisers.

HOWEVER, although the NPA captures the headlines it is still some way from capturing the country, with its population of 55 million, a huge military machine, a sizeable middle-class, considerable foreign investment and two major US bases — Clark Airfield and Subic Bay, home of the US Seventh Fleet. Washington, however, is taking no chances. US intelligence reports admit that a communist victory is a distinct, if distant, possibility, and although the combination of air and naval bases in the Philippines is regarded as ideal, scouts are touring the Pacific countries looking for alternative sites.

The short and medium-term US interests are best served by backing a subdued President Marcos long enough to ensure a smooth transfer of power to the legal, moderate opposition. Since Aquino's death most sections of the opposition have been doing rather well. In spite of a boycott from Aquino's younger brother Butz and the veteran nationalist politician Lorenzo Tanada, the Unido party and smaller opposition groups won just under a third (59) of the parliamentary seats last May — enough for Washington to declare it a democratic election. Indeed the US is widely thought to have backed the National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) which is credited with ensuring that a decent proportion of opposition votes were counted.

The boycott movement was run by Tanada's Coalition for the Restoration of Democracy (CORD). CORD organises and supports what has become known as the 'parliament of the streets' — daily demonstrations against the ruling KBL (New Society Movement). It has provided Butz Aquino with the opportunity to cast off the role of a younger brother and emerge as a populist leader. The election over, the parliament of the streets and the opposition in parliament are now fighting a united campaign against Amendment 6 which enables the President to govern by decree while permitting parliament to chew over the small print.

The whole of non-communist opposition politics is now yellow. Yellow is the adopted colour of the Aquino movement and, by a happy coincidence, of the Catholic Church. The Aquino movement, a shifting alliance of anti-Marcos groups, is riding on a wave of national emotion. It is not Aquino's fault that he has become a cult figure — a martyr and a national hero. His aim in returning from self-imposed exile was to persuade Marcos to concede power in return for a decent write-up in the history books. While Aquino's assassination spoiled Marcos for history, it gave the half-moribund opposition an historic opportunity. Almost anyone who now aspires to power is working within the Aquino movement and hoping to catch some reflected glory. The NPA has been quick to realise the potential for co-operation; at the Aquino rally the flags were both red and yellow. □

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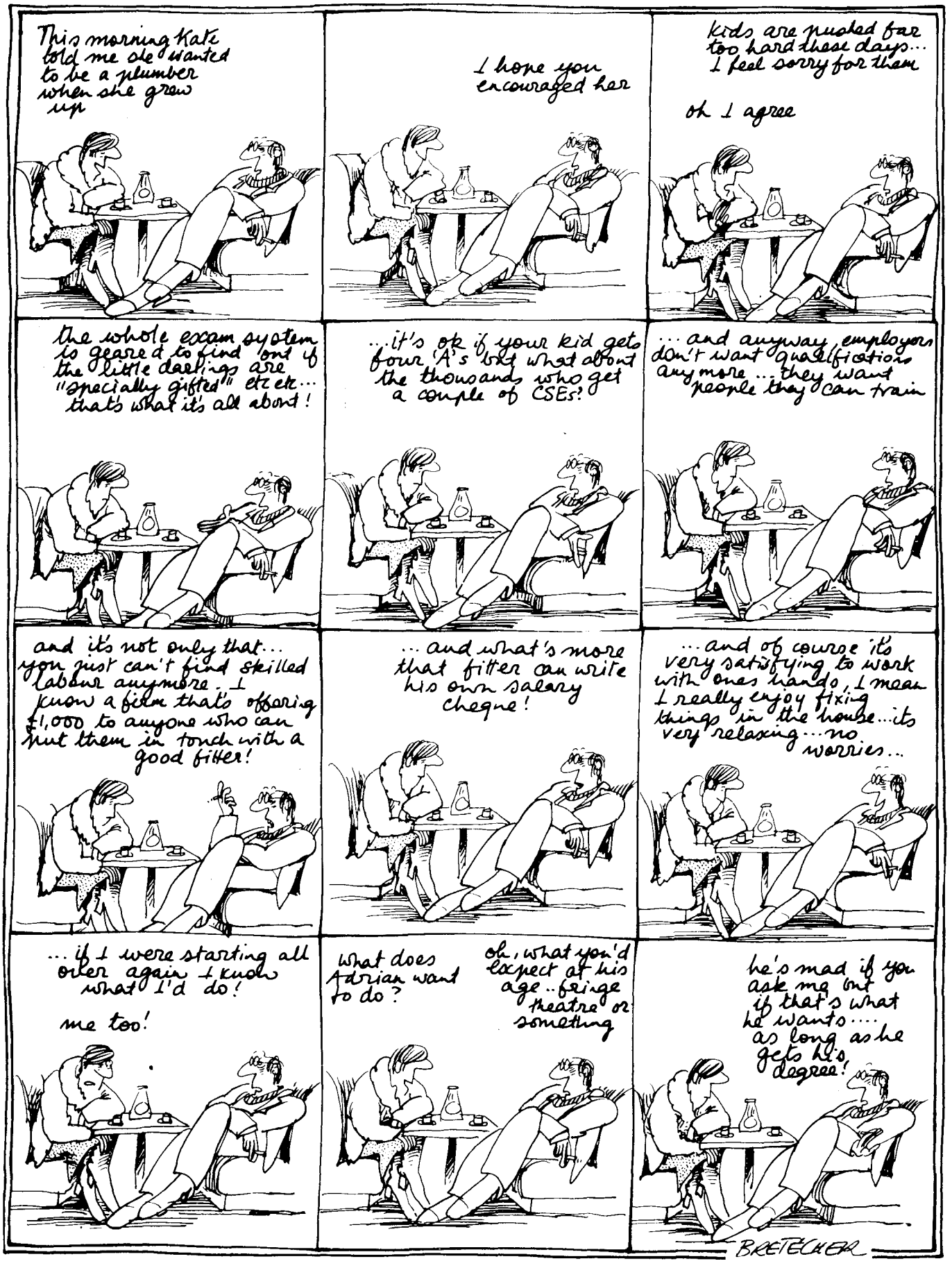
BRETECHER

The Liberal parent


This morning Kate told me she wanted to be a plumber when she grew up
I hope you encouraged her
kids are pushed far too hard these days... I feel sorry for them
oh I agree
the whole exam system is geared to find out if the little darlings are "specially gifted" etc etc... that's what it's all about!
...it's ok if your kid gets four 'A's but what about the thousands who get a couple of CSEs?
...and anyway employers don't want qualifications any more ... they want people they can train
and it's not only that... you just can't find skilled labour anymore. I know a firm that's offering £1,000 to anyone who can put them in touch with a good fitter!
... and what's more that fitter can write his own salary cheque!
...and of course it's very satisfying to work with ones hands, I mean I really enjoy fixing things in the house... its very relaxing... no worries...
... if I were starting all over again I know what I'd do!
me too!
what does Adrian want to do?
oh, what you'd expect at his age.. fringe theatre or something
he's mad if you ask me but if that's what he wants.... as long as he gets his degree!
BRETECHER

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LETTERS

Objects, not ideals

John Spurling, New Statesman

Your two correspondents (*NS* 14 September) excoriate me for not devoting my review of the exhibition *The Forgotten Fifties* (*NS* 7 September) to the controversies surrounding that and the art of the Fifties in general. I alluded to the difficulties the organiser, Julian Spalding, had had with this exhibition and remarked that he had disturbed a wasps' nest. Daring to salute the exhibition for its visual qualities I have drawn some stray stingers to myself.

The tone and nature of their criticism and their well-worn technique of cutting crude holes in the wall for their opponents' heads to stick out of — 'bourgeois liberal ideas', 'art's ideal values' — make me glad I chose to write about the art — no, not ideal values, but visual objects — rather than the arguments. Fifties' art may not be all that exciting, but at least it explores, suggests, hints, offers alternatives and shades of feeling, initiates an open relationship with the viewer; whereas the accompanying ideology — so neatly exemplified in these two letters — only rants, preaches, excommunicates and would, if it could, confine everybody to the same narrow channel of thought from one decade to the next but two.

The Guide bites back

Drew Smith, The Good Food Guide, London WC2

Mervyn Jones should do his homework before writing about guides (*NS* 14 September).

- The Good Food Guide does not allow restaurants to say they are included in the annual listings. We actively stop those places included from saying so, to protect our independence.
- The Guide has for the last decade campaigned against smoking in restaurants, to the point of withdrawing entries on some occasions.
- The Guide does not list places that take 'meat straight from the freezer' as the Real Food campaign in the current Guide makes abundantly clear. We now list those restaurants that do not use processed food.
- Mr Jones omits to say that readers' recommendations are checked by a team of 400 inspectors employed, as he says, for their 'experience and expertise'. We do not employ 'staff' inspectors because we have found that it is unsatisfactory to have people eating two, three, or (heaven forbid) more meals a day. These inspections cost tens of thousands of pounds each year.
- The point about readers' recommendations is not that one opinion is more valid than another, but that a large number of people have endorsed a restaurant; 80 per cent is the figure we normally require for inclusion.
- I have never included a restaurant on the basis of only three recommendations 'from different addresses'.

Mr Jones is living in cloud cuckoo land if he thinks there are good restaurants with plentiful customers that do not appear in the Guides. Unless, of course, he calls good food boil-in-the-bag sauces, tinned vegetables and synthetic cream sweets at exorbitant prices, which is another argument altogether.

Action man

Duncan Campbell, New Statesman

Unlike Michael Leapman or Ray Fitzwalter, Editor of Granada TV's *World in Action*, I did not visit the recent Edinburgh TV festival to debate 'investigative journalism'. On my return last week from a trip to Scandinavia, I was somewhat suprised to see Leapman approvingly reporting (*NS* Diary 31 August) Mr Fitzwalter's claim on that occasion that 'TV now had the monopoly of true investigation' — to the exclusion of print media — and by his own comment that investigative reporting by the *Guardian* or the *New Statesman* did not measure up to the real hard graft of TV investigators.

Absolute rubbish. In the first place, Leapman overlooks entirely the *Observer*'s recent excellent investigative reporting. In the second place, his suggestion that the *Guardian* or *NS* cannot afford 'true investigation', but merely print leaked documents reflects a serious deficiency in either reading, understanding, or both. Thirdly, many print journalists could readily testify as to the frequency with which we are depended on by TV researchers for cut-price investigation, information provision and research. Finally, a comment on Mr Fitzwalter's TV style of 'true investigation' is in order.

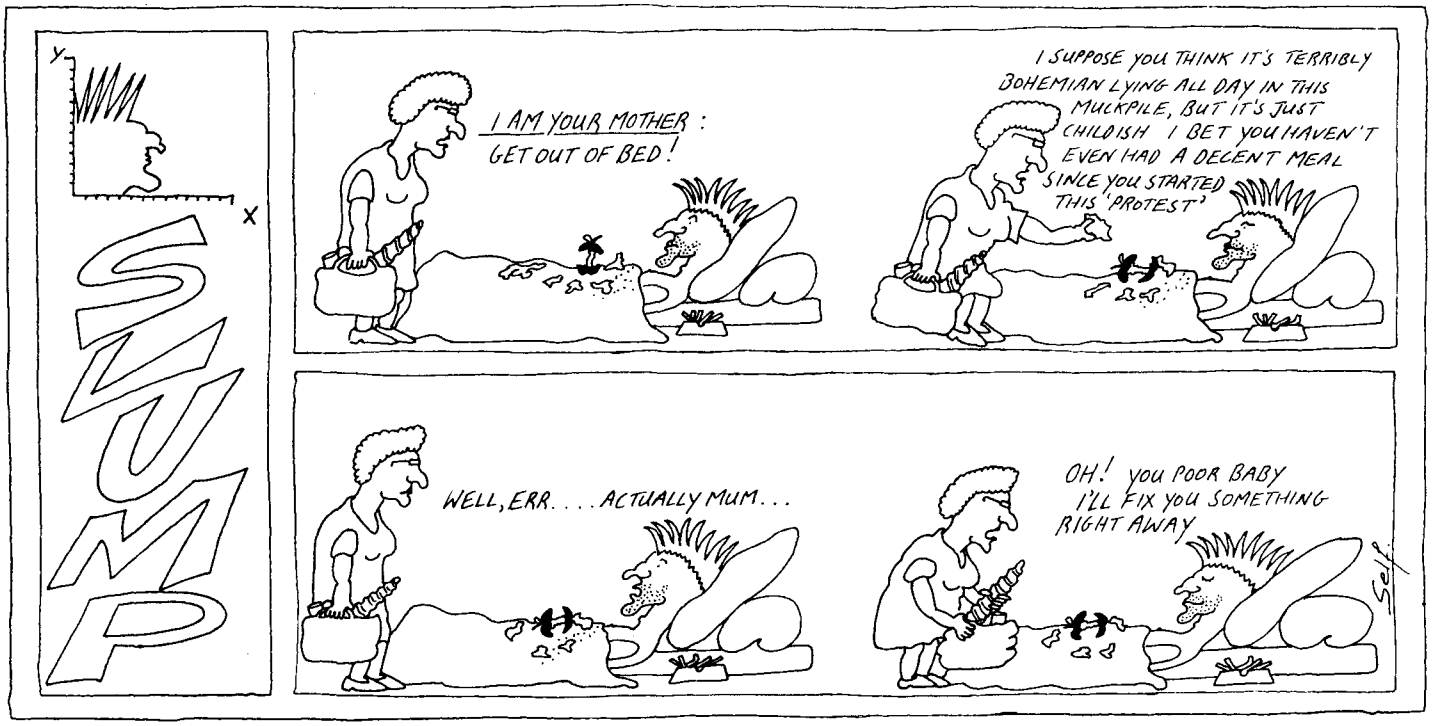
In 1980, the *New Statesman* offered Ray Fitzwalter and *World in Action* the fruits of two years' work and two months of intensive investigation, concerning security abuses inside GCHQ, based on the experience of Mr Jock Kane. An agreement was reached on shared research and joint publication. In short order, Mr Fitzwalter and his staff broke every rule in the journalistic book and each point of agreement between his team and the *New Statesman*. They took everything the *NS* had obtained, then compromised a sensitive source, withheld vital information that they were bound to pass on, and finally attempted to transmit a programme that gave no credit whatsoever to the *NS* for providing the story and research. A few days before publication, a member of Mr Fitzwalter's staff become so conscience-stricken about what was happening behind our backs that he came specially to confess all that had taken place to Bruce Page, then Editor of the *New Statesman*.

The *New Statesman*'s 1980 experience with Mr Fitzwalter and *World in Action* is not unique. Neither he nor Mr Leapman has done any service to either print or TV journalism by offering or repeating such ill-thought-out remarks.

Stuck in the same mentality

Jean Hill, London SW17

Just when I think things may really be changing. I come upon a reference in Ted Honderich's eulogistic review of A. J. Ayer's *More of my life* (*NS* 14 September) to 'the ladies of his life, a quite satifactory number and assorted . . .' I feel very depressed. Has Ted Honderich any idea why?


Y
X
SUMP
I AM YOUR MOTHER : GET OUT OF BED!
I SUPPOSE YOU THINK IT'S TERRIBLY BOHEMIAN LYING ALL DAY IN THIS MUCKPILE, BUT IT'S JUST CHILDISH I BET YOU HAVEN'T EVEN HAD A DECENT MEAL SINCE YOU STARTED THIS 'PROTEST'
WELL, ERR. . . . ACTUALLY MUM. . .
OH! YOU POOR BABY I'LL FIX YOU SOMETHING RIGHT AWAY
Self

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Policing the miners

Peter Wallington, National Council for Civil Liberties, London SE1

The National Council for Civil Liberties has established an independent enquiry, which I am chairing, to investigate urgently the civil liberties implications of the current miners' strike. Our terms of reference are:

> To enquire into and thereby establish the fullest possible account and the civil liberties implications of the role of the police, the police authorities and the criminal courts in the events arising from and relating to the NUM dispute, which began in March 1984.

As an independent group we approach these issues with minds as open as our awareness of events reported in the press and on radio and television permits. Although we shall be greatly assisted by the team of researchers already engaged in gathering information about the dispute, to establish the facts we also need evidence from those most directly involved.

I should like to invite evidence from members of the public who can assist us in any way. This appeal is addressed to miners and their families, those resident in the mining areas affected, police officers, members of police authorities, lawyers and others involved in advising and assisting those arrested during the dispute.

Evidence should be sent to the Miners' Inquiry, 21 Tabard St, London SE1 4LA, not later than the end of October. Our limited resources may prevent us from acknowledging all evidence but it will all be carefully considered. Confidentiality will also be respected.

The private approach

John Hatch, House of Lords, SW1

My attention has been drawn to comments made about me by David Caute (*NS* 17 August) when I was in Africa.

I would never contest any author's right to express their own opinion of my activities. Mr Caute is quite entitled to regard any speech of mine as platitudinous, though I would question whether the Labour Party's assistance to anti-colonial leaders over the past 40 years, its participation in anti-apartheid movements and its efforts to secure the release of Mandela and Sisulu come into that category.

What is more important, however, is the accusation that in my fraternal speech to the ZANU Congress I avoided 'any mention of Matabeleland, pacification, free elections or detention without trial'. Surely such issues are inappropriate to a fraternal speech. How would the Labour Party react to mention of Northern Ireland or violence on picket lines by a foreign fraternal delegate? If one is more concerned with rectifying injustices than personal publicity it is more constructive to talk personally of such issues than in public. I am glad to say that Bishop Muzorewa has been released since the Congress.

Race and unemployment

Dr Aaron Haynes, Employment Division, Commission for Racial Equality, London SW1

Michael Lewis (*NS* 7 September) describes the activities of the London Campaign Against Checks (LCARC). LCARC's aim is to ensure that no figures are produced to show whether particular minority groups are disproportionately unemployed and, if so, which.

The LCARC believe they are striking a blow at racism. However, the Commission for Racial Equality's experience is that it is essential to know and regularly to update the unemployed figures to show, in particular, how the black community is faring. In the absence of that information, there is no incentive on organisations to redress the balance of disadvantage. Asserting that it exists is one thing, regularly proving and demonstrating it is another. Any hope of action depends on pressure deriving from the latter.

If there are racists about in high places they will be delighted to be able to say truthfully, courtesy of LCARC, that there is no evidence of discriminatory effects on unemployment.

FEEDBACK

Where's the bloody horse?

FEW SOCIALISTS, I trust, will disagree with the main body of Anthony Wright's article 'For a sensible extremism' (*NS* 7 September). True enough, Cole and Tawney were thinkers whose concept of Socialism remains valuable and relevant. We need to re-read them, though we need even more to find men and women in this generation who can write like them. More dubious, to my mind, is Wright's view of the relationship between philosophy (most of us would say 'ideology') and political strategy. He seems to be putting the cart before the horse — or rather, assembling a cart packed with goodies but providing no horse to pull it.

The cart is the philosophy, and its importance is to ensure that a Labour government will do the things that Socialists want and actually bring about what Michael Foot called 'the transformation of society'. That quotation should remind us that, whatever the defects of Foot's leadership and the causes of Labour's 1983 defeat, lack of a philosophy wasn't among them. The horse is the activity directed toward opposing the Tories and regaining power.

If you wait for the day when two armies will line up, one shouting 'We are for capitalism!' and the other shouting 'We are for Socialism!', you will wait forever. The man who uttered this caustic warning — a man never accused of denying the value of philosophy — was Lenin. The political battle, whether fought at the barricades or in the polling-booths, is a conflict of human needs, hopes, opportunities and emotions, arising from the conditions of the hour. For the combatants, philosophy is a guide but not a weapon.

Thus, we have to qualify Wright's assertion that the 1983 election was 'not merely a political defeat but a philosophical one'. If this means that Mrs Thatcher's philosophy came out on top and continues to shape the actions of her government, yes. If it means that her possession of a philosophy was the cause of her victory, no. There were all sorts of reasons, amply chewed over in the aftermath. Actually, her philosophy is an unpopular one and an essential ingredient of her success is her ability to disguise it.

Memorable was the moment when, after Neil Kinnock had castigated Mrs Thatcher's record, someone in the audience called out: 'At least she's got guts.' When you think of it, 'at least' can be translated as 'despite her faults, philosophical or otherwise'. These, in the interjector's mind and in many other minds, were outweighed by her guts. Labour did not appear to have guts, or determination if you prefer a politer word.

Years ago, when the Tory government of Harold Macmillan was riding as high as Mrs Thatcher's is now, and when Labour had lost three successive elections, Dick Crossman wrote an article defining two possible postures for the Labour Party, which he labelled AG and FO. AG stands for Alternative Government, meaning the presentation of policies that Labour might pursue if returned to office. FO stands for Fighting Opposition, meaning a vigorous contestation of Tory actions. Crossman emphatically advocated FO. It will be seen that this distinction cuts across the usual dichotomy of Left and Right. Labour's elaborate and unreadable 1983 manifesto, though drawn up in conformity with the ideas of the Left, was in reality a choice of AG.

If you decide on FO, you are saying: 'We find this government's actions so intolerable that we propose to obstruct them, and if possible frustrate them, by every means available.' The effect is to present the convincing appearance of a party impatient for power and ready to put the pursuit of power ahead of all other indulgences, such as its internal disputes. Still more important, the effect is to make it credible that Tory policies — having been thus fought — really will be reversed at the earliest possible moment and radically different policies will be implemented. A party that follows AG incurs the risk that voters will say: 'Ah well, they may talk big, but they'll behave just the same when they get in.' A party that follows FO dispels that impression. Mrs Thatcher, between 1975 and 1979, was a passionate believer in FO.

In 1984, the outstanding example of FO is the miners' strike, which is being waged to obstruct and frustrate the pit closures that are a vital element in the Tory economic design. I don't know if the miners are going to win, though I'm distressed by encounters with Labour politicians who write off the chances. It seems to me obvious, however, that a victory for the miners would be a far more significant *political* event than a rhetorical triumph for the Labour front bench in the House of Commons, or the gain of a seat in a by-election, or a lead in the opinion polls. In fact, it would throw the entire Tory programme into disarray and puncture Mrs Thatcher's reputation for invincibility.

I don't, therefore, go along with Wright's criticism of Hilary Wainwright, who (as Wright puts it) 'attacked the Kinnock leadership for its failure to endorse the Scargill version of the class struggle'. I detect in this phrase an implication that Socialism is something distinct from the class struggle, a view that neither Cole nor Tawney would have taken. Cole, it's worth recalling, was bitter in his denunciation of the TUC and the Labour leadership for deserting the miners in 1926. As I understand Hilary Wainwright, she wasn't so much criticising Kinnock's philosophy as deploring a missed opportunity for a whole-hearted bit of FO. What I should like, as doubtless she would, would be to see Labour's political leaders put in a stint on the picket-line (which might, incidentally, curb the aggressiveness of the Metropolitan Police). Whether the miners ultimately win or lose, that would be a signal that FO rather than AG is to be the chosen strategy.

Mervyn Jones

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Sadism, sex and the Princess

As the press goes wild about Harry, Rosalind Coward and Diana Simmonds analyse what media and audience want from Princess Diana — even when she is pregnant

DIANA, Princess of Wales, has one of the most famous faces of all time. Easily as famous as the face of John Lennon or Jesus and for infinitely less reason than either. That fame has little to do with her personal talent or charisma and everything to do with the practitioners of the modern media and their audience, the public. Of the two, which is the cart and which the horse is difficult to see; indeed the one is often pulled by the other; nevertheless the end result is the same: since Diana burst upon the grateful consciousness of the tabloids and their assorted cousins, a day has rarely gone by when her gleaming blonde head hasn't smiled tentatively from the cover and hoisted sales of that issue by anything up to 20 per cent.

Throughout her meteoric career, as second only to Michael Jackson, pundits have paid their mortgages by filling column inches with their opinions on every aspect of her persona, real and imaginary. Crucially, despite the obviously speculative and, most frequently, inaccurate nature of the punditry, those column inches and glowing portraits continue to fascinate and beguile millions of willing or reluctant punters. The phenomenon is commonly known as the press's 'love affair' with the princess and, on the surface, it does seem rather like the frantic passion of the adolescent schoolboy, larger versions of whom form, if not the backbone, then certainly the underbelly of Fleet Street. Closer examination reveals a darker and less simple relationship. There is an element of underlying nastiness which is both potentially sadistic and yet works to elicit the public's sympathy at the same time.

The sadism could perhaps be explained by a classic 20th-century reaction to Diana's type. Anita Loos altered image, if not fact, for ever more when she made her deathless assertion that 'gentlemen prefer blondes'. Over the years fanzines and even more learned publications have speculated repeatedly on the possible truth of that statement, pointing to the popularity of the Jane Russells and Elizabeth Taylors in order to stave off mass brunette suicide or panic buying of peroxide.

However, what remains is a tangible sense of the differing perceptions of blondes and brunettes. Brunettes are apparently reassuringly earthy and easily translate to that familiar and comfortably contemptible image of the sultry temptress, tart or gypsy. They are thus containable and relatively safe as women. Non-peroxide blondes are a different prospect, eliciting, like Diana, an often ambivalent attitude. Alfred Hitchcock was not the first, or indeed the last, man to work out a form of misogyny, unconscious or otherwise on a blonde. Grace Kelly was the great love-hate of his life and career. He both adored and was enraged by her glacial cool, serene untouchable blondness and, by his own admission, sought to destroy that facade — as he saw it — and reveal, on screen, the heaving-bosomed sex bomb he believed lay beneath.

His instinct for persecution reached a cinematic nadir with his next Grace clone Tippi Hedren, wherein the scenarios in which she was required to perform were as rapacious, sadistic, ambivalent and punishing as a supposedly fictitious screenplay could decently be. And perhaps it's more than coincidence that Grace, Princess of Hollywood and Monaco, set a precedent for the terms on which a female 'outsider' could successfully be incorporated into royalty — the precedent of a certain Aryan stereotype of sexuality.

From the very beginning of Diana's emergence as the one true Fairy Princess, the love affair has been nothing if not ambiguous, that part often existing only in those two words. As the shy gawky teenager was hounded around South Kensington and the Scottish moors, the treatment by the press was more rapacious and ruthless than anything meted out to a comparable media figure before or since. The printed syrupy gush served to cloud behaviour which humiliated her, as a young woman, in a way that would have been unacceptable but for a tacit notion of, on the one hand, the public's right to know (the press's right to pry in translation) and, on the other, the way in which the activities are whitewashed as a 'love affair'.

The famous photograph of her with the afternoon sun revealing that 'she wasn't wearing a petticoat' was a mean and deliberately staged stunt that had much in common with 'come here little girl, Uncle James only wants to give you a sweety'. Her reported distress was surely not that millions knew what her legs looked like, but that millions knew she had been made a fool of by a group of men to whom she had obediently been polite and compliant, like any well brought up gel.

The ambivalence and underlying desire to crack the serene facade continues unabated and has some curious facets. The same photographers who manoeuvred her into the patch of sunshine now accompany, precede and generally surround her on every excursion other than to the bathroom. The gentleman who fuzzily revealed her six-month-pregnant tum to the tabloid world grins at her as he requests 'just one more, this way' at Carlisle, Calgary, Uluru and Windsor Great Park. Generally she smiles politely, greets them by name and complies. After all, it's her job. And needless to say, it's their job too and one which they tend to pursue with uncharacteristic gusto and imagination. It is manifest in the peculiarly unkind and risible angles of the 'love affair'.

The foreign press illustrates it most clearly. Their reports tend to be more fanciful and often simply ludicrous merely because their readers haven't a clue and are not held back by centuries of respect for their betters. Thus the Italian magazine *Nouvella 2000* could confide with authority that the Queen's favourite music is that of the Rolling Stones, an assertion that not even the *Sun* would try to get away with on the home market.

However, the tone gets close to a salacious kind of voyeurism when the supposedly authentic reports move in to close and intimate detail of Diana's sexual habits and personal foibles. Some accounts

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All photos: Rex Features

rival a sitcom, as in the scenario where the Royal Couple stir spoonfuls of bromide into their bedtime cuppas to allay the rampant lust which otherwise overcomes them each evening. To say nothing of the alternative version where Charles moves out to a separate suite in order to work and have a bit of peace, away from the panting princess. In the main the British press actively self censors actual scandal — not through a sensitive feel for good taste but because their organs require dirt without damage to the institution; thus their best efforts are rather more subtle. The apparently concerned treatises on her alleged anorexia eventually resolved themselves into paeans to her fashionable slimness; that is, she is 5'10", 120lbs, Size 10 and thus far too thin to be anything other than a superb clothes horse. After that seam dried up there was her deep unhappiness (or blissful happiness) to dissect: she wanted a divorce, she was ecstatic; she was going to leave the palace, she fretted about sporty Charles; or, Charles was fed up with being away from her, with being too close to her temper or perhaps her extravagant purchase of exotic undies.

A DEEPER TRUTH is that, more often than not, there is absolutely nothing to say about a young woman who does very little with her time other than look terrific in public and work out to Jane Fonda in private. Thus it is absolutely necessary for the Diana brigade to come up with *something* to justify their time, salaries and expenses, which is where the imagination in the pooling and inflating of real and

fabricated snippets comes in, and there is rarely more than a few weeks respite either for hunters or hunted.

This time around there was less let-up during her pregnancy than there was when the Queen made her personal, and largely unheeded, plea to the supremos of Fleet Street to lay off during the gestation of the Crown Prince. It was compounded by Diana's (relatively) public pregnant persona which had forced a new tack on to the hounds: their baying had so far failed to bring her down, she was increasingly successful as the beautiful, serenely cool but sensual blonde. Even the pack couldn't quite bring itself to snap too obviously at a pregnant mum, so the Hitchcockian sadism erupted in more lateral ways. The (new) *Revue* for example reported 'Di's Ouija Plea To Charles' — a sorry tale where 'leading churchmen and spiritualists agree with the pregnant princess' that the Prince of Wales is apparently coming unglued over 'his yearning to talk through the ouija board with his dead Uncle Dickie'. Charles apparently once confided in a friend that 'When I dance with Diana it's as though Uncle Dickie were guiding me around the floor.' Altogether, no wonder the pregnant princess was worried.

On the other hand, the *Sun*'s account of the recent violent death of Diana's uncle was in the lip-smacking style of reportage which had little to do with Lord Fermoy's 'bloody body', nor with the pathologist's statement that 'the end of the barrel of the weapon was embedded in the wounds' but quite a lot to do with the close and exhilarating proximity to a gory tragedy of the otherwise off-limits Perfect Modern

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Mother. The headline of 'Brave Di's Agony' provided the perfect cover to continue the long running vicarious consumption of the object of desire. The media attention to Diana's pregnancy was also revealing of current attitudes towards pregnancy and the pregnant woman. It's not just that Diana was the first publicly pregnant royal. Actually there have been precious few women at all whose pregnancies have been so visible on a regular basis. Harriet Harman brought pregnancy to the Commons; Esther Rantzen to prime time TV, along with Anthea Redfern and Jan Leeming with her bulge discreetly hidden behind the newsdesk. They are among the very few who have remained in the public eye and none have attracted the publicity which surrounded Diana. In an unparalleled way the British press chronicled, scrutinised and commented on this pregnant woman.

The reason why the press has been able to pay such relentless attention to her is because she has been constructed to represented a very particular kind of womanhood. While at one level she is clearly seen as universal woman — a heterosexual 'romantic' courtship, marriage, babies, family devotion — she has also been required to be something else. According to the British press, Diana is pre-eminently modern. And this is almost certainly why they feel able to take such gloating interest at a time when, previously, 'decency' would have prevailed. For the modern woman, we are led to believe, no longer tactfully removes her swelling self from the public eye. She continues about her business, not treating pregnancy as an ailment and cause for wilting in corners, but something to be proud of.

But the adjectives used around the pregnant princess gave the game away as to the terms on which the expectant woman is now publicly acclaimed. Diana, Mum-to-be, was 'glamorous', 'elegant', 'slim', 'blooming'; above all she was fashionable. 'The Princess of Wales can't help setting fashion trends even when she's pregnant' the *Standard* told us.

> When Prince William was on the way the Princess established the vogue for jokey picture sweaters. But this time around she has achieved something far more significant. With just one satin dress, its shawl collar swept across to tie in a bow low on one hip, she has changed the silhouette of maternity clothes.

This change of style was in part related to Diana's ascendancy to high glamour, heralded by her butterfly-like emergence after the birth of William. Not only had she 'got her figure back' (the ultimate accolade) but she'd gone further, she had lost a few more pounds and was dressed even more glamorously. But Diana's high fashion pregnancy also had other roots whose seeds were sown before this particular insemination. For several years Jane Fonda (perhaps the single most pernicious influence on ideologies about women this decade) has been pummelling away with her message. *You* can still look good during pregnancy. This obsession with weight and slenderness has clearly been gaining ground in pregnancy literature. There's hardly a book available which is not centrally concerned with advising women about their diets. It usually gets more space than what to do if a child is born disabled. Needless to say the concern with diet goes far beyond good nutrition and is primarily a relentless chorus about the 'problem' of putting on too much weight, the difficulties of 'getting your figure back', and the truly dire consequences of loss of morale apparently inevitably associated with weight gain and sagging muscles.

MUCH OF THIS modern attitude towards pregnancy is attempting to redress the situation where women were seen in mutually exclusive categories; career girl (who won't want babies), mother (who doesn't work and isn't sexual) and the sexually alluring woman (who certainly isn't reproductive). There has been a healthy rejection of these rigid and false distinctions, but strangely enough there was one interesting facet in this ideology. There was at least open to women a symbolic position of motherhood. Women could, if they wanted to, allow their bodies to express a maternal position. And even if this fixed position of motherhood was highly problematic it at least allowed an expression of some aspect of women's power: they had the option of letting the waistlines expand, of allowing their bodies to become, in short, maternal figures.

However, the media have responded to challenges to the idea of fixed positions of motherhood in a way almost as problematic as the old stereotypes. The modern pregnancy is celebrated in the media insofar as it denies the maternal body, in that it disguises the growing form. The praise which Diana brought upon herself was for disguising the pregnancy, for remaining fashionable, but,above all, for continuing to look sexually desirable. Here is modernity represented as the ability to 'carry off' pregnancy with as little loss to heterosexual desirability as possible. It's the last assault on women's bodies to maintain at all times the value of that desirability which this culture so promotes. Yet even Diana had to go underground for the last two months. Even dramatic dieting and vigorous work-outs to Duran Duran will not be able to deny the fact that the pregnant body does not and cannot be forced into the shape most highly valued by this society — the slender, streamlined, boyish, unwomanly, fatfree body. In the last instance the pregnant body remains the source of embarrassment as a symbolic reminder of women's capacity in a culture which has no symbolic acknowledgment of that capacity.

In England's longest running soap opera, the Royals, whose daily saga can be followed in any tabloid or the *Times* Court circular, Diana has moved from shy youthfulness, through high fashion glamour to become the emblem of modern woman. Narrative functions in soap opera are by no means fixed and in the Royals various characters are ascribed new attributes as new elements enter the story.

Diana's arrival into 'the family' itself caused certain characters to shift ground; the press became openly hostile to Anne as the bitchy sister-in-law once they had the truly charming and naive Diana. And Diana's pregnancy also produced a very recent phenomenon: implicit criticism of the Queen who was retrospectively coloured as the 'bad mother' — old fashioned, stuffy and cold in comparison with Diana's warm, close, loving maternity. Charles too has suffered a sea-change, moving first from Royal Romancer to loyal husband. Now he's taken on an altogether more risky hue, the champion of 'alternative' ('I prefer to call it complementary') medicine, previously respectfully ignored as the province of his mother. With Charles it is presented by the press as a general dottiness — which incidentally serves to defuse his more radical pronouncements.

But if the characters change positions, the parameters of the story don't. They remain marriage, the family, inheritance and descent. And that's what is pernicious about Diana as Modern Woman. Being a modern woman is not seen as being someone who has choices to make about sexual relations, about lifestyle, about whether or not to have children, or about the difficulties that face women who have children in a society which refuses to assume collective responsibility for its offspring. All these actual problems, with which feminism has been grappling for some time, disappear under the representation of modernity as maintaining heterosexual desirability. Being modern becomes largely a matter of how not to get large, of how to stay trim and how to remain, even at the most improbable time, slim and sexy. □

Rosalind Coward is the author of the recent Female Desire *(Paladin/Granada). She is pregnant. Diana Simmonds is the author of the forthcoming* Princess Di — The National Dish *(Pluto Press). She is not pregnant.*

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Eleonora Duse: emotional accuracy at a time when flamboyant histrionics were the fashion

Direct and terrible

Rupert Christiansen

Duse
WILLIAM WEAVER *Thames & Hudson* £12.50
No Bells on Sunday: The Journals of Rachel Roberts
ed. ALEXANDER WALKER *Michael Joseph* £9.95

FEMINIST historians and biographers have so far been wary of taking actresses seriously, perhaps partly because of a residual disapproval of the sexual display and exploitation involved in the profession. An actress's occasional glittering material success can also be interpreted as an insult to the rest of womankind, the fruit of an intensely self-centred individualism rather than a useful victory in a war fought on behalf of the entire female sex. Yet actresses have also been extraordinarily courageous, exposing themselves to the full bitter price which society exacts from women who stand up in public and make a noise: they deserve posterity's respect.

Both of these books are constructed round an actress's most personal voice — in Duse's case her letters, in Roberts's the journals she wrote in the last 18 months of her life. William Weaver has produced a flat and uninvolved but scrupulously documented biography of Duse, while Alexander Walker has fleshed-out Roberts's own writing with some slick show-biz prose and interviews with a lot of the men and some of the women involved in her catastrophic career. It is hard not to feel that both books would have been better if a woman had composed them, and Weaver's in particular suffers from a lack of sympathy and a reluctance to explore Duse's complex motivations and temperament.

Nor, at another level, does it fulfil the blurb's promise that this great actress will be studied 'within the intellectual, artistic context of her time'. The facts are straightforward: Eleonora Duse was born in Italy in 1858, her parents third-rate travelling players from whom she learnt her craft. In 1884 she became sensationally famous for her performance in Verga's *Cavalleria Rusticana*, a trail-blazer for Italian naturalism or *verismo* which rose against the domination of the well-made costume melodramas of Scribe and Sardou. Duse straddled the two repertories and for the next 25 years toured the western world in a remarkable range of roles, including Dumas' old warhorse *La Dame aux camélias* and the avant-garde works of Ibsen and D'Annunzio. Unfortunately, Weaver paints all this 'intellectual, artistic context' very skimpily. Adelaide Ristori, for instance, Duse's major precursor, is simply mentioned a few times without any attempt to assess her influence; nor — surprisingly for an author who has written so well on the subject — is there anything about opera and its relationship to legitimate theatre.

Duse's reputation was founded on her appeal to the higher instincts. She was always the intellectuals' actress, passionately admired by Chekhov, Hofmannsthal, Joyce and Shaw, whose corruscating appreciation of her art is a highlight of the book. She was constantly compared to her slightly older contemporary Sarah Bernhardt and adjudged spiritually exalted, subtle and earnest. The fact that she wore no make-up on stage was much remarked. 'Bernhardt was always studied and more or less artificial,' wrote Charlie Chaplin. 'Duse is direct and terrible.' Without conventional beauty or Bernhardt's magnificent voice and technique, she embodied authenticity of emotion in an age when the theatrical fashion still centred on flamboyant histrionics.

Ironically enough, Duse's letters — and Weaver's book functions best as a selection and translation of them — now sound absurdly self-dramatising and insincere. Three correspondents received the majority of them: Enrichetta, her daughter from a brief and loveless marriage; Verdi's librettist, the composer Arrigo Boito, who made a disastrous adaptation of *Antony and Cleopatra* for her and with whom she had what Weaver aptly describes as a 'lofty, literary' love affair; and thirdly, Gabriele D'Annunzio, who wrote for her a series of violent *fin de siècle* dramas, dripping with Wagnerism and perfumed decadence, and who provided Duse with the great romantic involvement of her life. The closing line from his *La Figlia di Jorio, 'la fiamma è bella'* ('the flame is beautiful') became for her what 'a handbag' was for Edith Evans, and fairly encapsulates both D'Annunzio's literary style and Duse's idealism. Their relationship eventually foundered on more familiar rocky ground, when D'Annunzio fell for an aristocratic young widow and left Duse betrayed and embittered.

By the time she retired in 1909, she had become, like her friend Isadora Duncan, a public figure, worshipped for her greatness of soul as much as for the splendour of her art. She now devoted herself to her daughter, to Italian feminism and a sadly abused project to establish a rest-home for under- or over-worked actresses. The cinema briefly fascinated her, and she made one film in 1915, but it was only financial problems that impelled her back to the stage, when in 1921 she re-appeared in Ibsen's *Lady from the Sea*. Three years later, exhausted by the pressures of touring, she died, in Pittsburgh of all places.

Rachel Roberts was another 'direct and terrible' actress who rose, along with Osborne, Finney and Courtenay, on a new wave of naturalism. In plays such as E.A. Whitehead's *Alpha Beta* or films such as Lindsay Anderson's

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This Sporting Life, she showed a power and honesty, a capacity to convey pain and the endurance of it, which few actresses of her generation have equalled.

The journals which make the core of this book were obviously written as an attempt at self-analysis and therapy. They reveal an intelligent and sardonic woman defeated by the classic actress's malaise of insecurity and mistrust. She wanted to be beautiful and she neurotically craved the trappings of glamour. Her brief spell in the role of Hollywood wife, married to Rex Harrison, enthralled her: the divorce was, as Alexander Walker suggests, like an expulsion from paradise, and she wasted the rest of her life and talent trying to get back into a place that she half-despised. A series of increasingly desperate and pathetic affairs, accompanied by severe alcoholism, brought her to suicide in 1980.

For all the overlay of film-star biography scandal, this is a harrowing book which shows a woman who can admit that she is 'physically healthy, able, attractive, intelligent and talented — and nice' while at the same time wilfully lacerating herself, largely surrounded by people (with the notable exception of Lindsay Anderson, who emerges as sane, strong and completely loyal) incapable of helping her. It is easy to think of someone like Rachel Roberts as a self-indulgent *diva*, who caused everyone a lot of trouble, but a book like this reminds one of the isolation and vulnerability that a successful actress still confronts. Duse was able to sublimate her frustrations into a fervid romanticism; Rachel Roberts's consolations destroyed her. □

No solution

Michael Heffernan

Agatha Christie: A Biography
JANET MORGAN *Collins* £12.95

> 'Goodness,' said Giles. 'I never thought of that.'
> 'No,' said Miss Marple. '*You believed what he said*. It is really very dangerous to believe people. *I* never have for years.'

Miss Marple knows the rules of the game and, if you want to beat Agatha Christie in the race for the culprit, you have to imagine what the murder would look like if, as must be the case, someone is lying. And, if you can work out who, then you might hit upon the missing how or why. Rest assured, no mystery will remain. But what of the mystery writer herself? Can she be discovered telling the odd fib across the tea table, hiding resentments and jealousies in the herbaceous border or between the keys of the typewriter?

Janet Morgan has decided to ignore Miss Marple's advice and narrate Agatha Christie's life along the lines laid down by her autobiography, completed when she was 75. Anything else, Dr Morgan claims, would be an impertinence. Besides, there are no hidden motives, although there is plenty of fresh evidence. Letters, bills, diaries, notebooks, all add colour to the picture we already possess without distorting it: a dignified, tall lady of intelligence, professionalism and wit, good at

Mark Haddon

plots, less so at characters. Yet it is the social attitudes of those characters which seem to inform Dr Morgan's book, rather than the vitality of Agatha Christie herself.

In describing the Torquay of the Nineties, Dr Morgan tends to idealise the world of Agatha's childhood and youth; but the facts suggest her early life was marked by disillusion and loss. At five, she was whisked off to the Pyrenees in an effort to cut some of her idle father's investment losses. He died when she was 11 and Agatha found herself, as the youngest daughter by some years, tied to a mother who could not afford Agatha's London season and took her instead for a cheap equivalent in Cairo. A poor but respectable young woman, she depended on invitations. 'Attractive young people to fill the house and make up a party were much in demand and it was not necessary to be rich. . .Hosts and hostesses ensured that impoverished girls were not induced to gamble for money at cards or at the races.' The humiliations of this life do not strike Dr Morgan.

Agatha married Archie Christie at the beginning of the Great War. He was a daredevil, in love with aeroplanes, which he learned to fly as early as 1912. The marriage lasted 12 years, during which Agatha, who wrote her first crime story during the War, became a professional author. Then came disaster: first, her mother died, then Archie began a passionate affair and wanted a divorce. Deeply depressed, in December 1926, Agatha disappeared from home and was not found for ten days, until recognised in a Harrogate hotel, where she had been staying under an assumed name.

Enthusiasts will turn straight to the pages in which Dr Morgan describes this event, the central, indeed the only, mystery of Agatha Christie's life. They will be disappointed. For while she assembles every piece of available evidence, she ends up by accepting completely Agatha's own explanation of what happened: she lost her memory, possibly after losing control of her car and hitting her head.

'There are moments in people's lives on which it is unwise as well as impertinent for an outsider to speculate, since it is impossible to be certain about what actually took place.' The extreme politeness of this remark infects the whole of Dr Morgan's book. She writes throughout as if Agatha might be harmed in some way by any questioning of her version of what she felt. As a result, there are few moments when Dr Morgan appears to get inside her subject. The disappearance marked a complete change in Agatha's life: the end of a marriage, the consolidation of her crime writing and, soon after, the beginning of a new relationship which was to last for 40 years. In Dr Morgan's account, however, it is just an episode, a private matter which the nasty press made unnecessarily public: nothing from which we can draw any insights into Agatha herself. Furthermore, everyone but Agatha is held to blame: Dr Morgan never hesitates to hand out moral wrist-slaps to anyone who might have caused her heroine pain.

The Agatha Christie of the biography has no vices and so, ironically, becomes less interesting as the book goes on. The quick, less reverential portraits of the other characters are often livelier. But it is in the accounts of the surroundings of Agatha's life that Dr Morgan is at her best, particularly the passages on middle-class life in England before the Great War and the descriptions of Agatha's incessant travels. □

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FICTION

Lost boy

Roger Lewis

Empire of the Sun
J.G. BALLARD *Gollancz* £8.95
Stained Glass Elegies
SHUSAKU ENDO *Peter Owen* £7.95
Stars and Bars
WILLIAM BOYD *Hamish Hamilton* £8.50
Infante's Inferno
G. CABRERA INFANTE *Faber* £9.95

TO THE EUROPEANS living opulently in Shanghai, the war at first seems remote and exotic. Jim, eleven-year-old hero of **Empire of the Sun**, follows the stomping armies and buzzing aeroplanes on newsreels undistinguishable from Hollywood yarns. Battling on the screen has a cinematic feel of make-believe. For genuine horrors Jim knows all too well — and he is not in the least flustered by them.

Ballard's novel contains a portrait of an Oriental city that rivals the squalor of Dickens's London. The war, when it arrives in town, is but an extension of commonplace violence. Jim's parents try to immure him from the repellent scenes (by transporting him to school in a limo and keeping him in a huge house full of watchful servants) but he manages frequently to escape and explore Shanghai on his bicycle.

The city has not hidden the scars suffered when Japan last invaded China in 1937. Jim remembers a trench of dead soldiers lying side by side 'as if they had fallen asleep together in a deep dream of war'. Rusting wrecks protrude from the Yangtze; skulls bubble to the surface of the paddy fields; pill-boxes and dug-outs remain. Life is cheap and death casual. Jim is unmoved by public executions, beatings, delirious noise. He does not retch at the bloated corpses bobbing near the river-bank — launched downstream by relatives too poor to pay for burial. He spares no feelings for the malefactors whose legs are broken on railway lines, the trussed dogs in the meat-market or the chickens whose necks are wrung by laughing wives.

Jim is a clever-clogs and a loner. He has written (he boasts) a book on contract bridge (using knowledge gleaned from eavesdropping upon adults) and is interested in aviation. An ambition is to be an honorary member of the Japanese Air Force. Though Jim is nominally English, he has never seen England. He belongs to that expatriate world of rootlessness, pinned down pathetically by facsimile institutions: the Cathedral school; the fancy-dress parties; the Country Club; the home thoughts of Piccadilly, Fortnums and the Strand. Jim loathes the nostalgia. He has no anchor in it and admires, instead, the severe self-esteem of the Empire of the Sun.

When Pearl Harbour is attacked, loyalties are put to the test. In episodes of much excitement, Ballard shows Jim's equivocal feelings of fear and enjoyment. The explosions, screaming and bustle make it seem as though Shanghai has been borrowed by Hollywood for a sound-stage. Jim's parents are lost in the confusion and he slips alone through a city ferociously under fire. Reaching home, he finds no one there. There are signs of struggle mapped in spilt talcum-powder (which, to Jim, resembles the steps of a frenzied fox-trot). He lives by himself, guzzling cocktail biscuits and stale chocs. He then moves into neighbouring villas, where there are similar portents of disarray. Jim feeds himself on what he can find in larders. It is all a dangerous game and he loves it, treating himself to a wild bicycle ride through empty rooms.

The food all gone, Jim is forced onto the streets. He comes to see Shanghai from the level of a street urchin, until, eventually, he is rounded up into a Detention Camp. Here Europeans lie ill and dying in cramped chambers like Dickens's Marshalsea. Inmates ingeniously sneak rations from one another and Jim's own canniness keeps him alive. Indeed, he is 'fuelled by hunger and the excitement of stealing from the old prisoners'. In the art of survival, charity is first to go. Loyalty is to oneself alone.

The Japanese are a vicious master-race, despising those who allow themselves to be conquered. Jim shares their code. Though he does not collaborate with them, he is temperamentally one of them. Comically, Ballard makes him like goats for the same reason — 'beasts of great moodiness and independence, qualities he admired'. When Jim reaches Lunghua Camp, he realises that his pragmatism and self-possession have finally severed him from all palpable memories of his parents: 'Their veiled figures still entered his dreams, but he had forgotten their faces.' With what does this chime? Ballard, in the finest piece of modern fiction I have read for some time, incarnates the spirits of Kim and of Barrie's Peter Pan. It is very much more than a war novel.

Shusaku Endo's suite of short stories, **Stained Glass Elegies**, also shows the Japanese to be emotional extremists (extravagantly courteous or extravagantly wrathful). His question is whether Christianity ameliorates them (Ballard's Jim is a confident atheist). Mostly, it doesn't. Innocence comes over as cowardliness. The meek will never inherit the earth.

Such a lesson is learned by Henderson Dores, perplexed art dealer, in **Stars and Bars**. William Boyd's farce would have made an excellent screenplay for Peter Sellers. Behind the shy reserve of its English hero lurks the ability to create much slapstick destruction. Sent to the Deep South to arrange the sale of a (yes, eccentric and reclusive) millionaire's Impressionist collection, Dores takes with him marital and extra-marital entanglements. These mesh with the cartoon creatures he is confronted with in Georgia. Boyd pours into his novel all the jokes he can think up that appertain to a panicky Brit in brash America. We even have the gag about confused hotel room numbers and a General caught with his trousers down. With a farce, we expect a miraculous twist at the end. Boyd gives us no such reward for reading his book. *Stars and Bars*, trailing off into another disaster, comes close itself to such a fate. As holiday reading,

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though, I enjoyed it — I adore Peter Sellers movies.

The keepers of the flame at Faber and Faber, however, are not to be excused for perpetrating **Infante's Inferno**. It is a purgatorial read: an epic of tooling akin to Walter's *My Secret Life* (489 pages of orificial pluggings that I once brought in a motorway Service Station). G. Cabrera Infante's vast tome charts the sexual education of a Havana journalist. As a slim exercise in parody (what kind of novel would you get if you crossed Anthony Burgess with Shirley Conran?) it would have diverted. But the earnest linguistic trickery is ultimately frivolous. Passed off as a work of literature (Márquez and Borges are hinted) it is hubristic, banal and, because it thinks itself felicitously written, pretentious. *Infante's Inferno* is not even worth the effort of reading with one hand. . .It couldn't raise a smile. □

Tucking in

Bill Greenwell

Life's Rich Pageant
ARTHUR MARSHALL *Hamish Hamilton* £8.95

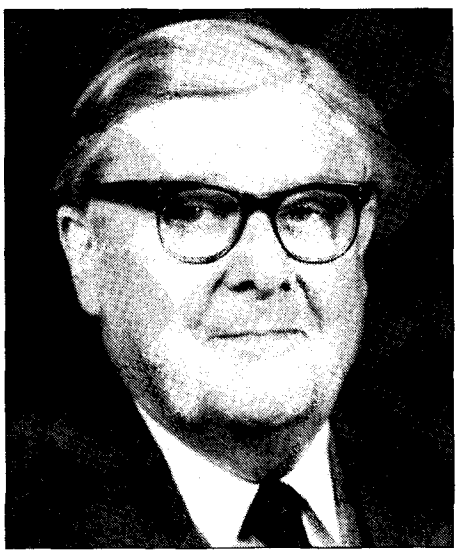
WELL NOW, after presenting us with such a thumping cliché ('Old Arthur has been at the damson wine again!') of a title, our bespectacled cherub springs, rather as one might if disclosing an unexpected second cache of éclairs, a bit of a surprise. For lo! the phrase, so it transpires, is vintage Marshall, and the *ODQ* have dropped him an official line ('You will be in under M') duly to sanctify the proceedings.

Here he is then, in full fettle, spreading the table with rich and gooey anecdotes. Reading this book is like diving into trifle, with our recklessly merry chef for ever lobbing in more and more sherry-soaked chunks. It bulges. Its sides split gently. There is a cast of hundreds and thousands, since Arthur adroitly avoids dropping names by slinging them happily left, right and centre. It's the best way. The man's glee is infectious, and he is quite capable of leaving his readers choking with laughter.

There is something decisively Bunterish about Arthur Marshall, notwithstanding his original claim to fame — impersonations of elderly females. Life to him has been a procession of tuck-boxes, and he has stuffed himself silly on the contents of each. He has swallowed the West End of London whole, and still found a hundred crumbs in the corner with which he may playfully toy. He has scoffed hundreds of schoolgirl stories — he remains Brazil nuts — and has gorged himself on every available soap-opera. He has squirrelled away an endless stock of little social idiocies and fed himself on *faux pas*, twittish lyrics, forgotten quips and bumper bundles of schoolboy jokes. He is a man to whom it would be dangerous to say the word 'Matron'; he could have the Ancient Mariner on his knees with a cue like that.

There is of course the matter of his prose: he is nothing if not to the mannerism born. There is that fruity extravagance of tone, the sentences that lope leisurely off down the page and ballooning paragraphs perpetually punctured by sly asides or pumped up with bracketed and imaginary ripostes. He is a little too fond of silly names for my taste, particularly when he is firing them off with double barrels. The stylistic confection he has perfected must owe something to massive overdoses of P.G. Wodehouse, and a grudging doctor might restrict him to a chapter a day. But perish the thought. A cream tea is designed for excess.

Hell's teeth, I must say something about his Rich Pageant, although 'more manner, less art' might be an appropriate summary of his autobiography. Son of consultant engineer, prep-school prankster, starstruck student, penner and performer of revue sketches, Oundle schoolmaster, reviewer of unintentional hilarities, intelligence officer tempted to tweak Monty's conk, more Oundle, more stage, more radio, the only man (surely?) to hold down regular columns in the *New Statesman* and *Sunday Telegraph* simultaneously, Call My Bluffer, but above all else, a champion chatterbox.



Arthur Marshall: 'bespectacled cherub' and 'champion chatterbox'

There is some Marshall miff about the business of his expulsion from the *NS*. Bruce Page's letter 'signed in his absence', promise of compensation not honoured, similar in the matter of proffered farewell present not yet received at Myrtlebank. After 45 years, a do best written up as rum. But that the parting of the ways was 'out of the blue', I doubt. His teasing praise of Mrs. T. was sounding increasingly odd in context, of which he must have been conscious. The Mystery of the Miserable Brush-Off is not, alas, so neatly sidestepped.

One little matter remains unresolved. My telephone directory has him down as C.A.B. Marshall, but we are not vouchsafed the inside story of these initials. There is a coy reference to the trio, a brief acceptance of a C., but, alas, nothing further. Perhaps there are prep-school meanies whose acronymic antics linger painfully ('I say, Marshall, *Taxi!*'), or is it (one likes to lob in some guesswork) a simple instance of shame ('Charlemagne Arthur Brinsley, if you must know')? Whatever the reason, this is an entertaining excursion into the life of our Myrtlebank muse. □

PAPERBACKS

Change and decay

Alan Brien

SUDDENLY, the new rulers order a complete *fetasha*, or search. Everyone is searched everywhere all the time. Since nobody knows who has, or hasn't, the right to search, everybody gives in. To object means admitting you have something to hide, and nobody knows what is being looked for.

'The next one might be only a few steps on, and the whole thing starts all over again,' reports the narrator of Ryszard Kapuscinski's **The Emperor** (Picador, £2.50). 'The searchers never give an acquittal, a general clearance, absolution. Every few minutes, every few yards, we have to clear ourselves again.'

This, and much more, reads like a Kafka-esque fable about the decay of an ant-hill society where soldiers and workers, dazed by the loss of their imperial tyrant, swarm through meaningless, mechanical routines. But Kafka's fantasies, in a pre-Hitler Europe, dreamed the realities of the Third Reich. Here, Kapuscinski, foreign correspondent of the Polish News Agency, reports the final years of Haile Selassie's Ethiopia and transmutes his journalism into a series of mythic folk-tales that might be incarnating the totalitarianism of any era from Ancient Rome to 30th-century Mars.

Like a latter-day Tacitus, despite the *fetasha*, he continues recording his eye-witness experiences and collecting first-hand interviews with survivors. This reportage is coloured by fiction, and studded with aphorisms, making it a highly polished work of art. But behind the dazzle, there is nothing — however bizarre, ludicrous and horrible — which (unfortunately) does not bear the stamp of truth.

The Jewish novelist Joseph Roth was born on the Polish-Russian border, son of a father who deserted his mother before his birth and then went mad. He was brought up by prosperous grand-parents, educated at Vienna University, served in the First World War as a press officer, left Germany after Hitler took over and spent the final years of his life in French hotels and cafés, until he died, in 1939, from alcoholism and self-neglect.

He frequently invented other life-histories for himself. Sometimes, he was a bastard, given away by his parents, brought up in poverty. At others, his father was a painter, a Polish count, an officer in the Imperial Army — something Roth himself always pretended to have been — or a high-ranking courtier. Even at his death bed, friends were disputing whether he was now a Jew or a Catholic; how far he had deviated from his youthful revolutionary sympathies to turn admirer of the Hapsburgs.

The Emperor's Tomb (Chatto, £3.95, also £7.95 Hb) might be the first-person memoir of one of his alter egos. This almost-aristocrat we first meet in Vienna in 1913, sleeping by day, partying by night, gradually realising the cushioning provided by the Dual Monarchy will soon be ripped apart. We leave him in 1938, as the Nazis invade, unable to understand

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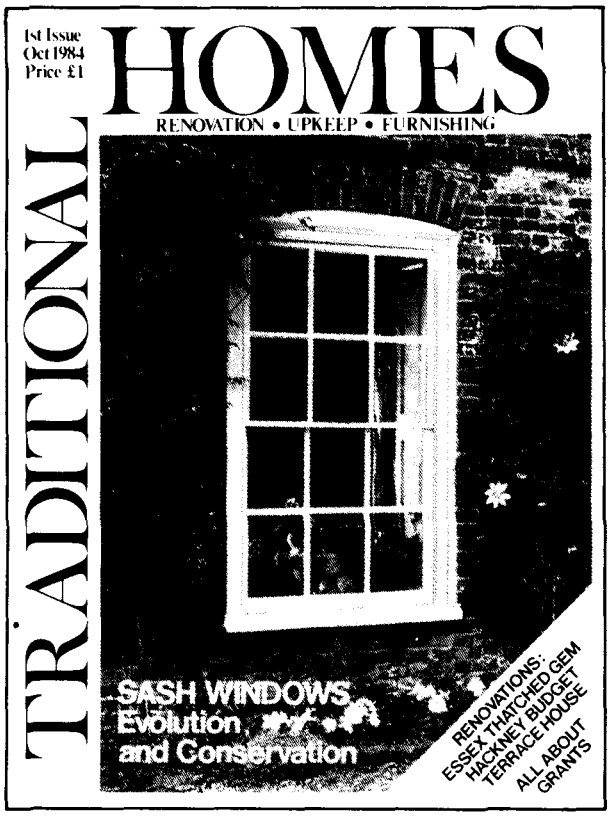
TRADITIONAL HOMES



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Collins

THE BUSH SOLDIERS

JOHN HOOKER

Difficult to say what is most admirable, the action of his epic plot, the daring with which he moves from a precise vision of Australia between the Wars to his imaginary historical moment, the irony of his contrast between British, Australian and aboriginal heroes, the complexity with which he presents his leading character, or the surprise he springs in locating the real enemy not in the Japanese invaders but in the invaded land itself . . . It's a real achievement.

DAVID MALOUF

£9.50 448pp

Collins

another civilisation has been destroyed, and stumbling off on the last page to the tomb of Franz Joseph crying 'Long live the Emperor!'

The novel teems with ironies. We can never be entirely certain which of the many Roths is speaking when, or how far the nostalgic elegy for a lost world is meant to be taken seriously. The two people who mean most to the hero are ordinary, provincial, a chestnut-roaster and a Jewish cab-driver, both from Roth's native Galicia.

In **Weights and Measures** (Everyman, £2.50), Roth sets his sad, sweet, sombre fable of the honest Inspector undermined by his own integrity back in Galicia, and that town of Zlotogrod which floats like a mirage on the fringes of *The Emperor's Tomb*, raising once more his persistent query — who really rules over the world? It says much for the impacted parochialism of British culture that this novelist, superior even in translation to almost anyone writing in English today, should remain so little known.

Geoffrey Grigson, 80 next year, is a man of letters, critic, poet, editor, publisher, anthologist, controversialist, who has been campaigning ever since he started *New Verse* in 1933 to make British literature tougher, wider and more grown up. He has helped to discover or rediscover artists like John Clare, Manley Hopkins, Auden, Samuel Palmer, Wyndham Lewis, Henry Moore and Ivor Gurney. Chatto are publishing, in hardcover, some of his memories of friends and enemies, *Recollections* (£12.50), while three of his other books have just appeared in paperback.

The English Year (Oxford, £2.95) is a composite journal, with entries for every day taken from the works of some 32 poets, painters and diary keepers. I respect Grigson's passion for the countryside, the nuances of weather, the splendid oddities of flowers and creatures, but I must say a little of it goes a long way. Do I really want to open the page for today, September 21, and find that a Kent yeoman, Richard Hayes, noted in 1766—'a robin sang all his note during Divine Service in the body of the church'?

His own jottings over a year (1968) in France, **Notes from an Odd Country** (Alan Sutton, £4.95) are however a continual delight. There is a lot here, too, about the landscape and its inhabitants, but his observations are always tied to history, society, people and literature. The range is wide: from the singularity of a moon rainbow to the ethical objections to eating lark paté. And when he rambles, it is to our advantage as when he moves on from a French delicacy *pet-de-nonne*, or Nun's Fart, to a mediaeval landowner in Suffolk, Rolland le Pettour, who held his patch by virtue of appearing before the King on Christmas Day to perform *unum saltum, et unum siffletum, et unum bumbulum* — 'a jump, a whistle and a fart'.

The reprint of Grigson's anthology of the Enlightenment, **Before the Romantics** (Salamander, £5.95), is also welcome. First published in 1946, it gave my taste a severe Augustan tang as an undergraduate. I still know several passages by heart and have never quite recovered from the impact of the final quote from Henry Fuseli — 'Can the reptile joys of a bee rival the lion's colossal pleasures?' □

Travellers' tales

Bruce Hepburn

On the Shores of the Mediterranean
ERIC NEWBY *Harvill* £9.95
Journey to Kars: A Modern Traveller in Ottoman Lands
PHILIP GLAZEBROOK *Viking* £8.95

WHILE ABSOLUTELY acceptable to the novice, Eric Newby's dangerously readable account of a lengthy journey clockwise from Tuscany around the cradle of civilisation as we know it is particularly well suited to post-graduate travellers, those of us who, having set off after the war with high hopes and £25 secreted about our persons, now recoil from the commercialisation of that adulterated inland sea.

Although paying ritual tribute to the glories that were Naples and Venice and advising us not to indulge in a passion for anything in its raw or natural state in Greece, he doesn't really get into his stride — and what a stride! — until he reaches the Eastern and Southern Mediterranean. Incapable of writing a dull sentence — 'Rissoles [in Albania, of which he has nothing good to say] like big toes which had gone to sleep' — he piles description on description and fact on fact like so many stones in the great pyramid (2,300,000 and still counting).

He distinguishes between the Seraglio, the Harem and the Sublime Porte and touches on the admonitory graffiti of Me'she'arm. He identifies King Zog as a Gheg. He describes the ritual associated with visiting the monasteries of the Meteora and the best place to shelter from the rain in Istanbul.

A compulsive and immensely erudite teacher, he instructs us in the post-operative treatment of castration, the salinity of the Dardanelles, the incidence of rupture among grape pickers, the history of Jerusalem, the Moorish conquests of Spain and the best route up Mount Olympus in a mist. This he ascends in the company of a physicist from Gottingen University, the last graduate of which seat of learning whom he had encountered having been, fairly typically, a Professor of Entymology with only one lung.

WHILE Mr Newby prefers to travel hopefully in the company of his long-suffering wife, for Mr Glazebrook, a much more self-consciously 'literary' writer, and none the worse for that, the arrival is the thing. He sets off, congruously from Victoria station, for Eastern Turkey (both authors agree that the plains of Troy are where sightseeing stops and adventures begin), to try and discover what impelled middle-class Victorians to journey 'in discomfort, danger, filth and misery among Asiatics whose lands reminded them — at the best — of Scotland'. No stranger himself to the striking phrase — 'travelling with your family is like waltzing with your aunt' — and steeped in the literature of 19th-century travel, he follows his predecessors on foot and in trains and on buses of varying degrees of unreliability, from Ephesus on the

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Aegean to distantly glimpsed Mount Ararat where Europe definitely ends.

En route he has many a cogent observation to make about places and people encountered, does a good deal of thinking in lieu of speaking a language which he doesn't understand and arrives at some interesting conclusions: that what the pioneers had been searching for was the antithesis of homeliness; that, like Sir Galahad and Layard in this respect, what they were looking for was sensation rather than knowledge, and hardship and privations and the reality behind the prettified vision of the Middle Ages served up to them in their confortable homes by Scott and Tennyson. And that they were trying to reconcile in their minds the conflict between what they had been taught, generally at Eton, about the virtues of both Judaism and Hellenism. In the end all is well. After encountering a certain amount of mild discomfort and a good deal of filth and not much danger and hardly any misery at all, he discovers on his arrival at Kars, where he finds a tremendously likeable spirit of liveliness, that he has never been less disappointed in the reality of an objective in his life.

Both Mr Glazebrook and Mr Newby display their wares so seductively that those of us who now prefer to take our holidays north of latitude fifty may well be tempted to turn south once more.

But then again perhaps not. What parts of Kars reminded Mr Glazebrook of, was, significantly, Edinburgh. Perhaps what we are all seeking without knowing it is Scotland. Scotland in the sun at all events. □

Prickles

Andrew Clements

Stravinsky: Selected Correspondence Volume 2
ed. ROBERT CRAFT *Faber* £35

IN HIS PREFACE to the first volume of Stravinsky's correspondence published two years ago, Robert Craft observed that 'a sufficiently complete "life" and an adequate examination of the music still cannot be written'. Too much biographical material remains unavailable; sketches and manuscripts are dispersed around the world. So Craft switched his efforts from writing a biography to preparing three volumes of letters, grouping them according to correspondent rather than chronologically, and building up a portrait of the composer's life in facets, following through a project or a collaboration from its earliest stages to fruition or abandonment. The first collection included letters to and from Cocteau, Ansermet, Auden and Craft himself; the second has a longer and possibly more illustrious list — Diaghilev, Nijinsky, Bakst, De Falla, Balanchine, Boulez, Nicholas Nabokov.

No composer of this century achieved greater celebrity than Stravinsky; no one worked harder at promoting performances of his own music or was more assiduous in obtaining the proper financial reward. Of the character of the man behind the severely practical exterior we know very little, and the letters so far published offer little more enlightenment. No doubt they fill out the chronicle of his life in more detail and set the historical record straight on numerous points (the wrangles over the copyright of *The Firebird* are most scrupulously documented), but there are no major musical revelations, nor even minor personal ones. The exchanges with Diaghilev are particularly disappointing, largely confined to single-line cables bickering over fees and details of concert itineraries. Here as elsewhere the record is frustratingly incomplete, with crucial letters missing.

What can be pieced together is not especially flattering. Stravinsky appears to have inherited a neurotic fear of poverty from his parents, and perhaps this insecurity made the public persona more brittle and easily damaged. Pierre Monteux, who conducted the first performances of *Petrushka* and *Le Sacre du printemps*, was a frequent victim of this hypersensitivity, especially when the composer began to conduct his own music for the gramophone in the late 1920s and Monteux became a commercial rival, but their correspondence proved to be the longest lasting of all, stretching from the *Ballets Russes* days before World War I up to 1957. Genuine affection is a rare commodity; even friendliness beyond strict business courtesy is strictly rationed. Manuel de Falla was clearly a long-standing and valued friend; so too was the violinist Samuel Dushkin with whom Stravinsky made recital tours in the 1930s and for whom he wrote the Violin Concerto, though even here their letters are largely confined to practicalities. Nicholas Nabokov appears to have got close to the composer in the last two decades of his life; only in old age did Stravinsky feel able to allow himself to be more discursive, to discuss wider issues.

But, though the prickles are rarely far below the surface anywhere in this collection, moments of malice are very rare; the tight control he kept on himself worked both ways. Frequently it is Craft who produces the knife. In reprinting the letters to and from Pierre Boulez, he seems to have taken the opportunity to open old wounds, emphasising the rift that developed between the two composers after a disastrous performance of *Threni* in Paris in 1958, which Boulez prepared for Stravinsky to conduct, and its polemical aftermath. In presenting this chapter Craft weaves extracts from the letters into a continuous narrative; elsewhere he presents them absolutely complete, relying on copious footnotes for background details. It is an approach which makes me uneasy: it is hard to resist the thought that we are being given a highly selective, synthetic 'life through letters', that Craft's ability to manipulate the material goes just a little too far. Almost all the primary-source material we have on Stravinsky has been mediated through Robert Craft — first the books of conversations, now the selected correspondence; his grip on the industry shows no sign of slackening. It would be a shame, though, if there were no room for an alternative, possibly more dispassionate commentator with access to all the documentation. □

Basil Blackwell

The Limits to Capital
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Selected Autumn and Winter Books

The books listed below are a selection from those which publishers hope to issue between now and the end of March. Some prices are provisional. Titles already announced are not included.

Fiction

JOAN AIKEN **Mansfield Revisited** *Gollancz* £7.95
BRIAN ALDISS **Seasons in Flight** *Cape* £7.95
MARTIN AMIS **Money** *Cape* £8.95
GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE **The Poet Assassinated and Other Stories** *Carcanet* £7.95
HILARY BAILEY **All the Days of My Life** *Heinemann* £8.95
BERYL BAINBRIDGE **Watson's Apology** *Duckworth* £8.95
TONI CADE BAMBARA **The Seabirds are Still Alive** *The Women's Press* £7.95 & £3.95
JULIAN BARNES **Flaubert's Parrot** *Cape* £8.50
CAROLINE BLACKWOOD **Corrigan** *Heinemann* £8.95
ANDRE BRINK **The Wall of the Plague** *Faber* £9.95
ANGELA CARTER **Nights at the Circus** *Chatto* £8.95
LEN DEIGHTON **Mexico Set** *Hutchinson* £8.95
ANITA DESAI **In Custody** *Heinemann* £7.95
J.P. DONLEAVY **J.P. Donleavy's De Alfonce Tennis** *Weidenfeld* £7.95
JANET FRAME **You are now Entering the Human Heart** *The Women's Press* £3.95
DERMOT HEALY **Fighting With Shadows** *Allison & Busby* £8.95
JOSEPH HELLER **God Knows** *Cape* £8.95
URSULA HOLDEN **Eric's Choice** *Methuen* about £7.95
CHRISTOPHER HOPE **Kruger's Alp** *Heinemann* £8.95
JENNIFER JOHNSTON **The Railway Station Man** *Hamish Hamilton* £8.95
MERVYN JONES **Joanna's Luck** *Piatkus* £8.50
ALAN JUDD **Short of Glory** *Hodder* £9.95
PENELOPE LIVELY **According to Mark** *Heinemann* £7.95
ALISON LURIE **Foreign Affairs** *Michael Joseph* £8.95
NORMAN MAILER **Tough Guys Don't Dance** *Michael Joseph* £8.95
SARA MAITLAND **Virgin Territory** *Michael Joseph* £8.95
DAVID MALOUF **Antipodes** *Chatto* £8.95
JAYNE ANNE PHILLIPS **Machine Dreams** *Faber* £8.95
DAVID PLANTE **The Foreigner** *Chatto* £8.95
CHRISTOPHER PRIEST **The Glamour** *Cape* £8.50
JAMES PURDY **On Glory's Course** *Peter Owen* £8.95
THOMAS PYNCHON **Slow Learner** *Cape* £7.95
FREDERIC RAPHAEL **Heaven and Earth** *Cape* £8.95
SIMON RAVEN **The Face of the Waters: The First-Born of Egypt Volume II** *Anthony Blond* £8.95
MICHELE ROBERTS **The Wild Girl** *Methuen* £8.50
ALAN SILLITOE **Down From the Hill** *Granada* £7.95
BARBARA TRAPIDO **Noah's Ark** *Gollancz* £8.95
JOHN UPDIKE **The Witches of Eastwick** *Deutsch* £8.95
GORE VIDAL **Lincoln** *Heinemann* £9.95
FAY WELDON **Polaris and Other Stories** *Hodder* £8.95
H.G. WELLS **The Man With A Nose and Other Uncollected Short Stories** *Athlone* £9.95
REBECCA WEST **This Real Night** *Macmillan* £8.95
CHRISTA WOLF **Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays** *Virago* £9.50 & £4.50
T.C. WORSLEY **Fellow Travellers** *GMP* £9.95 & £3.95
MARGUERITE YOURCENAR **Alexis** *Aidan Ellis* £8.95
ALEXANDER ZINOVIEV **Homo Sovieticus** *Gollancz* about £12

Poetry

ALISON BRACKENBURY **Breaking Ground and Other Poems** *Carcanet* £4.95
CHARLES CAUSLEY **Secret Destinations** *Macmillan* £7.95
DUNCAN FORBES **August Autumn** *Secker* £5.95
GEOFFREY GRIGSON **Montaigne's Tower** *Secker* £5.95
TONY HARRISON **Selected Poems** *Viking* £9.95 *Penguin* £3.50
DAVID HARSENT **Mister Punch** *Oxford* £4.50
SEAMUS HEANEY **Station Island** *Faber* £5.95 & £2.95
FRANCES HOROVITZ **Collected Poems** *Bloodaxe* £9.95 & £4.95
MICHAEL LONGLEY **Poems 1963-1984** *Salamander* £8.95
BLAKE MORRISON **Dark Glasses** *Chatto* £3.95
ANDREW MOTION **Dangerous Play: Poems 1974-1984** *Salamander* £7.95
PETER PORTER **Fast Forward** *Oxford* £4.50
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GARETH REEVES **Real Stories** *Carcanet* £4.95

Literature

MARTIN BOOTH **British Poetry 1964-1984: Driving Through the Barricades** *Routledge* £11.95
WILLIAM EMPSON **Using Biography** *Chatto* £9.95
BARBARA HARDY **Forms of Feeling in Victorian Fiction** *Peter Owen* £10.95
ALFRED KAZIN **An American Procession** *Secker* £12.50
JEFFREY MEYERS **Disease and the Novel 1880-1960** *Macmillan* £20
JEFFREY MEYERS (Ed.) **The Craft of Literary Biography** *Macmillan* £22.50
PATRICK PARRINDER **James Joyce** *Cambridge* about £20 & £6.95
A.C. PARTRIDGE **Language and Society in Anglo-Irish Literature** *Gill & Macmillan* £20

Art, architecture & photography

ISABELLE ANSCOMBE **A Woman's Touch: Women in Design From 1860 to the Present Day** *Virago* £14.95 & £7.95
DIANE ARBUS **Magazine Work** *Phaidon* £25
JOHN BERGER **And Our Faces, My Heart, Brief As Photos** *Writers & Readers* £6.95 & £3.95
DAVID HOCKNEY **Cameraworks** *Thames & Hudson* £30 until January 1985 £35 thereafter
REINHOLD HELLER **Munch: His Life and Work** *John Murray* £25
SARAH KENT & JACQUELINE MORREAU **Women's Images of Men** *Writers & Readers* £9.95 & £4.95
MERVYN PEAKE **The Drawings of Mervyn Peake** *Allison & Busby* £5.95
CHARLES ROSEN & HENRI ZERNER **Romanticism and Realism: The Mythology of Nineteenth Century Art** *Faber* £12.50 & £6.95
RONALD SEARLE **Ronald Searle In Perspective** *New English Library* £19.95 until December £24.95 thereafter
EDWARD WIND **Art and Anarchy** *Duckworth* £8.95

Music, drama, television, films

PETER BUCKMAN **All For Love: A Study in Soap Opera** *Secker* £9.95
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Attractive offer

Fred Halliday

Antipolitics: An Essay
GEORGE KONRAD *Quartet* £8.95

IT IS A pleasure, refreshing and rewarding, to read Konrad's political essay. Its themes are both specific and universal: the place of the writer in Hungarian life, the arduous history of Hungary in the 20th century and the military occupations some of which Konrad, now approaching 50, has himself witnessed, the impact upon Central Europe of the conflict between East and West, the need for intransigent opposition to nuclear weapons and the political systems that sustain them.

What gives his writing a special force and attraction is the fact that it does arise from his very particular situation under the tolerant dictatorship of Janos Kadar, and at the same time address, in measured but resolutely optimistic tones, the issues of peace and survival that concern the whole of the world. Konrad is clear in his criticism of the political regime in Hungary and of the role of the Soviet Union in maintaining it. He scorns, with sharp detail, the symbols of public life in eastern Europe — the standing ovations, the special privileges for cadres, the front-page reports of official messages and visits, the 99 per cent votes of support. He reminds us, towards the end of this book, that it cannot be published in Hungary.

At the same time, his critique has a proportion that so much dissident literature from the Soviet bloc lacks. He shows that Hungary allows considerable, if still insufficient, freedom to its citizens: to travel to the West, read foreign papers and exercise freedom of discussion. He recognises that his fate, as a critical intellectual in a country within the Soviet sphere, is rather preferable to that of one in some countries within the American sphere, such as Turkey or El Salvador. Time and again he rejects the facile premises upon which current cold war thinking in the West is based: that the USSR will crumble or give ground under pressure, and that eastern Europe will benefit from western hostility to the USSR.

His political programme rests upon the contrary belief, that greater freedom and security in eastern and western Europe can come only through reassuring the Soviet Union. The Soviet leadership should be made an 'attractive business offer', removing the military threats that menace them most directly and giving them the space to get on with the long-postponed task of reforming their own economic and political system. If, as he puts it, the USSR is to become more like Hungary, then Hungary is to become more like Finland, enjoying a greater margin of freedom in its internal and international life.

Konrad sees the optimal solution as being one in which the hold of both the USSR and USA on the other countries of Europe is lessened as they themselves work more closely together in a loose, voluntary federation. There is in his essay a deep conviction of the common interests of the European countries and of their common culture. It is welcome indeed, at a time when so many supposedly critical and socialist writers are digging themselves deeper into the ditches and *oubliettes* of nationalism, to find him calling for a new internationalism of the intelligentsia.

Konrad's 'anti-politics' is a little less utopian than some of the ideas gathered by others under that title. It is, in the first place, a call for rejection of the accommodation to state power and its trappings that has afflicted so many, and for greater confidence and assertiveness on the part of those who disagree. It is as much a form of withdrawal as a new path to altering government policies. But there is also the hope that if enough people do embrace this alternative, then they will form a force capable of challenging the political moulds into which European states are now set.

Konrad's reflections have their dissatisfying, at times infuriating side. Few of the reference points common in other discussions of these themes are to be found — other writers, historical events, dates, concrete analyses, all seem absent from his pages. For all his internationalism, his view of the world remains very much that of the richer parts of the northern hemisphere, with the result that the contribution of the tensions of the Third World to world politics is not recognised. And this enhances what is perhaps the deepest flaw in his book, one shared by many opponents of the arms race in East and West, namely his reluctance to recognise the depth of the conflict between East and West.

The current cold war is not just a product of the Yalta agreement, or of misunderstandings between élites, or of mutually reinforcing 'imperial' anxieties in Moscow and Washington. Were it so, it might be more open to some of the resolutions Konrad advances. Necessary as they are, moves towards disengagement in Europe and a lessening of bloc controls will be accompanied by continued conflict of East and West, in other areas of the world where such detente is not so possible and in the ideological sphere, where irreconcilable competition will subsist. The problem of all political visions — that of offering something radically different from the present, while showing how it can be attained in the real world — remains unresolved.

It is not, however, as if the rest of us have an easy answer either. What Konrad's book — elegantly and crisply translated by Richard Allen — does, is to make available a clear eastern Europe voice that converges with that of the peace movement in the West. In conditions more conducive to pessimism and one-sided judgments than ours, he has produced a resounding assertion of political optimism and critical balance. □

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John Welch

White lilac

White lilac, impossible nights
Whose heat disrupts the pages.

The nearly extinct are passing outside —
You must revert to these pages.

Reggae includes itself in the leaves.
The siren wails through your pages.

Brides for Babylon sway down the street,
Pass by in carriages of music.

In sweat-shops concealed behind
Derelict Georgian facades

The machines turn all night long.
Their finances enter the pages.

All this is a notion
White lilac has scattered.

Now the elderflower tips its plates towards you.
Their heavy must transgressed by traffic

Floats loose, over city streets —
Tonight you will sleep in their pages.

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In Moscow

Olga Semenova

A Vanished Present: The Memoirs of Alexander Pasternak
ed. ANN PASTERNAK SLATER *Oxford* £12.95

IN 1900, Moscow was a city of low, yellow-tinted buildings, of courtyards and trees and interlocking squares. In winter, snow was allowed to fall unhindered on the streets to form a thick carpet along which sledges drove, the horses' hooves kicking up a splattering spray along the way. In spring, the pavements, gutters, cobblestones, were transformed into muddy streams, along the Moskva river icebergs flowed, smashing against bridges to the delighted screams of passers-by. In summer, bustling ceased, gentry and servants trekked to dachas in the quiet, primitive countryside around.

It was into this Moscow that Boris and Alexander Pasternak were born, sons of a painter, Leonid, lecturer at the School of Art, and Rosa, a former concert pianist. Their earliest recollections were of smells and sounds, the oils and turpentines used by their father on his impressionist canvasses, their mother practising, Scriabin composing in the dacha across the field. Later, at school, in stiff grey uniforms, they ridiculed, with the rest of the capital, the pompous phrases the government used to mask the humiliation of defeat in the Russo-Japanese war. In 1905, they carved and painted black wooden pistols, in admiring imitation of older boys, true revolutionaries, Social Democrats. In horrified confrontation with real struggle, with their younger sister seriously ill, they were barricaded in the School of Art, saw students shot. Boris was beaten on the streets.

A Vanished Present is the memoirs of Alexander Pasternak, the poet Boris's younger brother, who became an architect and lived in Moscow all his life. They contain an unashamedly sentimental evocation of Old Moscow. They are the memories of a very old man, to whom the past has returned with a vividness that dims the present, tales told to a great-niece, brought up in exile in Oxford. With this subject, such sentimentality seems acceptable. The past evoked has so irrevocably gone.

The gold-suited firemen and the red-hatted messengers have disappeared, the bustling squares been bulldozed, the medieval churches torn down. In their place are faceless urban traffic schemes and concrete tower blocks. The lives of those who grew up at this time were inconceivably disrupted, people shot, imprisoned, exiled, families scattered to the winds.

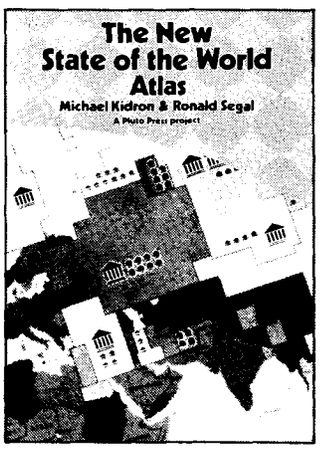
Alexander's memoirs recapture in prose the subjects of his brother's early poems, supplementing Boris's *Essay in Autobiography*. Alexander was three years younger than Boris and the two were very close. Boris, however, is not the central character of this book. Alexander's concern is to recreate an idyllic childhood in a vanished Moscow. He does this with an extraordinary lightness of touch, an almost impressionistic style. And then, he traces the gradual disappearance of this world.

OLD MOSCOW disintegrates under the twin pressures of technological and revolutionary change. Alexander recalls his first encounter with electric light on a trip to Germany, watching the first Russian aeroplane flight by Utochkin. He chronicles both the privations and denials which followed 1917 (with no reference to his brother's politics) and the artistic excitement of these years — the dance of Isadora Duncan, the poetry of Mayakovsky, with whom Alexander was at school, 'a handsome, yellow-bloused bully boy, with an astonishing tenderness of soul'.

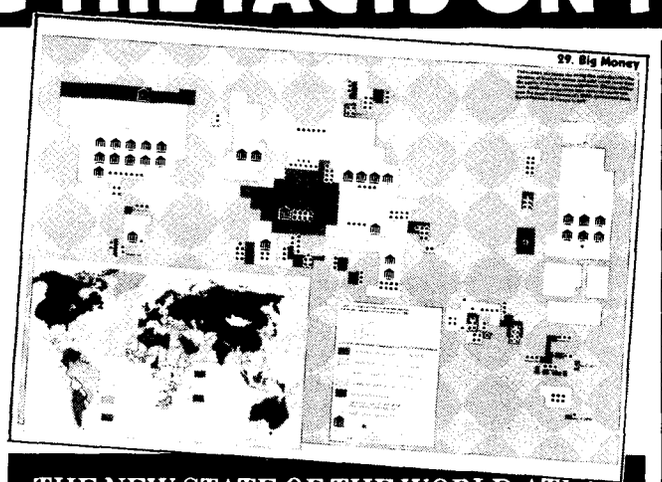
Together with the Moscow which was so central to their lives, the original unity and harmony of the Pasternak family is destroyed. This happens largely as a result of Boris's efforts to differentiate himself from it. Boris emerges in the memoirs only near their end, when he reaches his teens, a brilliant, stubborn boy, determined to excel, searching for his metier, throwing himself into one thing after another, giving each up in sullen fury when his achievements fail to match his ambitions. He studied musical composition for a long time,

PUTTING THE FACTS ON THE MAP

The first edition of The State of the World Atlas (1981) received international acclaim as a breakthrough in the communication of



facts and ideas about the contemporary world. This completely revised and updated second edition takes account of the dramatic changes in the world from 1979 to 1983. Many of the maps are entirely new in concept and presentation and every other map has been fully revised with new data, new visual treatment and more comprehensive information. The New State of the World Atlas is an illuminating and disturbing focus on the current state of the world.



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then renounced it completely on the discovery that he lacked perfect pitch. It was only in his twenties that he began to write. Alexander's account brings the young Boris to life in a way that even the poet's own memoirs fail to do. □

A word in time

Zdena Tomin

The Restoration of Order:
The Normalization of Czechoslovakia
MILAN SIMECKA *Verso* £16.50 & £4.95

'THERE ARE many articles, monographs and books available to the Western reader describing what has happened [and what is still happening] in Czechoslovakia since the Soviet intervention of August 1968. So why publish yet another book on the subject, moreover one written over six years ago?' The question is asked — and answered — by Zdenek Mlynar, former member of Dubcek's Politburo and himself an author of one such book, *Night Frost in Prague*, in his introduction to this book:

> I think there is every reason for an English edition. In the sixties, Milan Simecka belonged to the reform communists, as they are now generally called. Since then, he has been sacked from his university post and spent a year in gaol. . .Only after such scalding experience is it possible to re-enter the world of politics and ideology. Such authors are few and far between, and in the area of political literature they are usually rare. What they say is always comprehensible to people across political boundaries.

I couldn't agree more. In December 1981 and the early months of 1982, when the stately word 'normalization' began to appear so forcefully in General Jaruzselski's political vocabulary, it made me fear for Poland and its people more than the harsh reality of the ad-hoc prison camps. I found it hard to explain why such a moderate, even 'positive', political term makes me wince with pain — and only wished I had an English edition of Simecka's book at hand! Even though, luckily, it now seems that the Czechoslovak-type 'normalization' with its all-embracing 'civilized violence', its masterful application of the stick-and-carrot method leading to an almost total decimation of culture and providing enough outlet for passive 'adaption' of the population, will remain a unique experience, Simecka's book deserves to be read with utmost care. There are lessons to be learned.

> Whenever existing socialism uses such [drastic] force, in the form of water-cannon, riot sticks and tear gas, it is only aping police tactics in the West. The totalitarian state has far more powerful weapons at its disposal: all citizens are its employees and it is no problem at all shifting them up or down a scale of incentives — rewarding the good and punishing the bad. This capacity is a totally modern weapon. It has worked well in Czechoslovakia because it was brought into play only when existing socialism, in its infrastructures, most resembled a consumer society, that is, when it had something to reward or punish with. . .The lesson that people drew from the fate of the persecuted intelligentsia was that it does not pay to meddle in politics, and that no political ideal is tempting enough for one to jeopardize one's full enjoyment of the benefits of consumerism as offered by existing socialism in Czechoslovakia. But woe to the state which no longer has anything to hand out!

The English edition of *Restoration of Order*, in an intelligent, crisp translation by A.G. Brain, may have come none too soon — but certainly not too late. With an unexpected force and clarity it refreshes the reader's memory of the fact that very many of yesterday's protagonists of the 'disorder' of 1968 and today's 'dissidents' are indeed socialists. The term 'existing socialism' arouses in Simecka 'a sense of profound disillusionment', for 'turning a movement totally geared to the future into a self-satisfied present'. Yet socialism, together with a 'plebeian foundation' of the nation, has created in Czechoslovakia a 'homogenous people'. 'Exclusive castes' and 'feelings of social inferiority' do not exist; 'traditional sources of authority such as property, the power of money, social origin, status and others which endowed certain individuals with the right to rule' have 'collapsed'.

> A homogenous people is fertile soil for major experiments because when a ruling group is as reactionary as ours, the people are necessarily to the left of it. . . .The political balance that dominates most Western countries, in which close election results have been the norm for several decades, makes it difficult even to propose a political programme of a more audacious variety. In Czechoslovakia — and, it seems, in all other socialist countries — the overwhelming majority of people would instantly support a reform programme based on democracy and social justice. That is one of the principal lessons of 1968.

And of Solidarnosc, one might add. 'The restoration of order. . .merely postponed the decisive round in the contest over the European face of socialism. But there can be no doubt that that section of the globe which dubbed itself "existing socialism" has a fascinating history ahead of it.'

Many things have happened since Milan Simecka finished his book in 1977 which may have both enhanced and curbed his historical optimism. In Czechoslovakia, the Charter 77 human rights movement shattered the frozen surface of 'normalization' — and forced the neo-Stalinist regime and its secret police to show just what sharp and 'uncivilised' teeth they have (Simecka was among those who suffered). The horizons of the movement have recently broadened and include an intense, working dialogue with Western peace movements (Simecka's new writings contribute to it). Even if the governments remain stubborn, citizens of East and West are drawing closer together. In this process, writers like Milan Simecka with their personal involvement, optimism, humour and a marked absence of futile resentments play a major role. □

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ONE OF THE most inspiring passages of this book (which is not to disparage the rest of it) is the preface. Here, the author explains how she came across a 76-year-old woman in a small terraced house in Nelson, Lancashire, who was harbouring a headful of memories and some old wooden boxes full of half-forgotten documents. This was Mary Cooper, daughter of Selina and the key to Jill Liddington's remarkable work. She had lived in the same house for almost all her life and had shared it with her mother for nearly 50 years. But for a chance meeting between the daughter and the historian in 1976,

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Selina Cooper's story might have been hidden for good — and now that I have read it I can hardly bear to contemplate the loss. The book is valuable not just for what it tells us about the past, but for the way it reveals the process of discovery, and how fragile that can be where women in general — and working-class women in particular — are concerned.

Piecing together Mary's anecdotes with letters, notebooks, press-cuttings and oral testimony, Jill Liddington has reconstructed the 82 years of Selina Cooper's life. It begins among the mining communities of Cornwall, where her father was a navvy on Brunel's new railways. His early death left the family destitute and they joined the rush of Cornish women and men seeking work in the industrial north. At the age of ten, Selina started her first job, as a half-timer in the cardroom of a cotton mill, going to school in the afternoons. She married Robert Cooper, a weaver, in 1896 and had a son in 1897, who died in his first year. In 1901 she moved with Robert and her second child Mary to the house in Nelson where the three were to stay for the rest of their lives.

Trade unionist, socialist, Poor Law Guardian, feminist, suffragist, pacifist, birth control campaigner and magistrate, Selina was always active in politics, always rebellious. At the grand age of 74 she was drummed out of the Labour Party she had helped to form, for her allegiance to the pro-Soviet People's Convention. 'K.B.O.' was her motto in later years: 'Keep Buggering On'.

Selina came to feminism through socialism. As a member of the ILP in 1902, she fought to get David Shackleton elected for Clitheroe, as the third Labour MP ever to enter the House of Commons. He had been sponsored by the Nelson Weavers, of whom 60 per cent were voteless women, but once he reached Westminster it became clear that neither he nor other Labour men would make votes for women a political priority. Women would have to fight for themselves. Selina became active in a number of local suffrage campaigns and, from 1906, was employed as an organiser for the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.

The NUWSS was a large, non-party federation, which eschewed the militant tactics of the suffragettes. In Selina it acquired a rare asset: a brilliant public speaker and skilled organiser who had first-hand experience of industry and trade unionism. Painstakingly, over nearly a decade, she worked with other socialist suffragists to break down the barriers between the labour and women's movements. This meant persuading the Labour Party to abandon its support for universal adult suffrage, in favour of votes for women on the same terms as men. It meant persuading the NUWSS to come off the fence and campaign with the Labour Party. And it meant luring the powerful miners away from their traditional allegiance to Liberalism, towards Labour and female suffrage, in order to bring the full force of the TUC behind the women's struggle.

All three goals were achieved, just before war broke out, splintering the new alliance. Selina fought on — for peace, for birth control, and against the backlash of the 1930s, when new technology cut jobs in the weaving mills and women were told they should give way to married men.

What is sadly missing from this massive book is any intimate sense of Selina's character. We know that she was loved and admired by other suffragists; that she paid scant attention to her husband; that after the death of her son she secretly collected pictures of babies in a scrap book; and that she Kept Buggering On. But she left no memoirs, wrote no letters that survived (although she kept many that were sent to her); she did not move in intellectual circles or mix with writers who might have turned her into a legend in her time. Her daughter was unrevealingly loyal and not especially articulate. Such are the problems posed by our would-be working-class heroines: they don't make easy copy.

Jill Liddington has clung to the evidence and resisted temptation to invent or speculate. But what she cannot deliver in colourful personal details, she makes up for in her careful analysis of the social and political context in which Selina worked. She explains why Nelson was such a fertile breeding ground for socialism. She shows how the militant suffragettes and the radical suffragists formed — in spite of bitter differences — a powerful pincer movement. She helps us understand how links were forged more than three-quarters of a century ago between socialism, feminism and peace campaigning. And she shows how a separate organisation of women grew strong enough to put real political pressure on the institutions of the labour movement. We are lucky that she persevered. □

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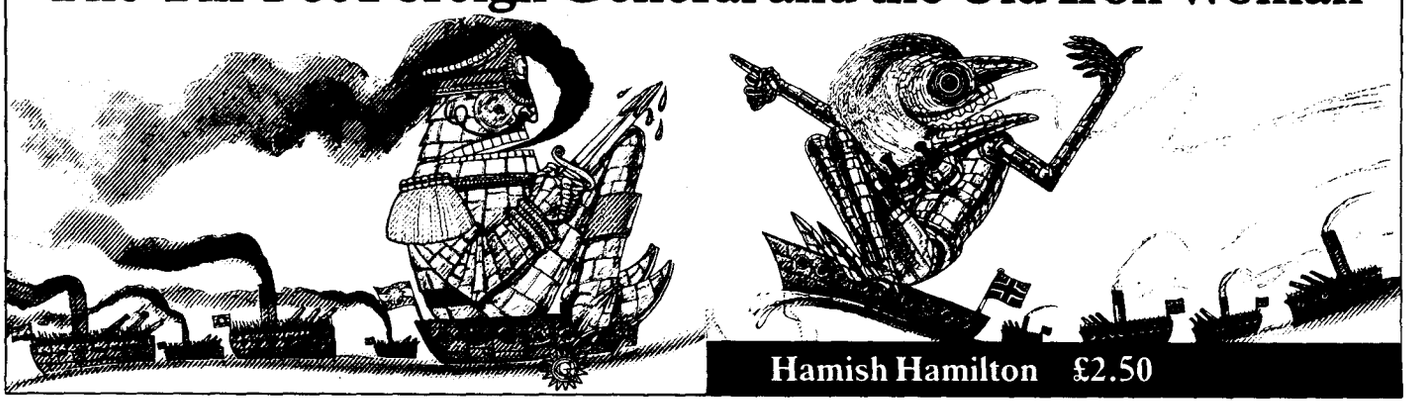

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ART

Some intimations of mortality

John Spurling

Quiet assertion of national pride: detail from Christen Köbke's *Lake in Copenhagen*

The Age of Vermeer and De Hooch
RA, until 18 November
Danish Painting: The Golden Age
National Gallery, until 20 November

THE SPONSORS are American Express and Carlsberg respectively; the catalogues cost £7.95 and £7.99 and weigh 4½ and 2½ pounds; the contents of the exhibitions are in each case a choice selection of international loans from the 'Golden Age' of one of our smaller Northern European neighbours; the autumn season of Art Spectaculars has opened.

In fact, neither the Dutch nor the Danish exhibition is enormous (just over and just under 100 works) and the size of the catalogues is accounted for by generous illustrations and the double page devoted to each work. These are detailed, sober, meticulously made things and they seem to lay upon their curators and viewers alike the bourgeois injunctions of care, respect, quiet concentration and moderation.

Yet the historical conditions were neither quiet nor moderate. The 17th-century Dutch were conducting a long war with Spain and transforming themselves into the foremost trading nation of the western world; the early 19th-century Danes were first shattered by their war with Britain and later divided by rebellion and civil war. If the bourgeois virtues enshrined in the paintings were those that made the Dutch the richest people in Christendom and gave them a merchant fleet larger than the combined fleets of England, France, Spain, Portugal and Germany, they were also those that sustained the Danes when they were bankrupt and offered them some alternative to despair when their fleet was towed away to England. Your settled bourgeois community is as tough as a privet hedge and no one should mistake the immense passive strength — the confidence in a particular world and its rightness — that underlies these neatly calculated proportions, these sweet, restrained colours and carefully angled lights and this crafty, undemonstrative brushwork. The wild excesses of 20th-century art have only made them look the more steadily natural — as if comfortable Dutch interiors and soft Danish landscapes were the norm from which we deviate at our peril.

All the same, the norm once settled and agreed upon, much of the pleasure and all the action offered by the Dutch genre painters consists in suggesting the dangers that threaten it and the insubstantiality against which it is erected. In his useful and timely *Scenes of Everyday Life* (Faber, £25), Christopher Brown (he has also contributed some of the entries to the RA's catalogue, which is less easy to read but much easier to afford) discusses some of the commonest themes of Dutch genre painting and traces their origins. The *homo bulla* theme, for example — man's life compared to a soap bubble — goes back to classical times, but appears in the Netherlands in the 15th and 16th centuries in the symbolic forms of *putti* blowing bubbles, fading flowers and dispersing smoke. All these symbols are still present in 17th-century genre painting, but incorporated into and half disguised in realism, so that you can take the scene depicted both ways, as a celebration of the solidity of life and as a warning of its transience.

In the work of the greatest painters — Vermeer, Dou, De Hooch, Gerard ter Borch — this ambivalence turns the standard ingredients of genre into subtle forms of visual poetry, philosophy and drama. Reality becomes a spider's web of nuance and counter-suspension, in which the very perfection of the artist's technique of illusion and allusion is made to work against itself: reality is like this, isn't it, but this is not reality, of course. Dou's exquisite night-scene, *Astronomer by Candlelight*, lights the man's face, his book, his hour-glass, the sculpted *putto* on the pillar of his curtained alcove and one side of his table-top globe with a single candle. The reality of the details, however, is subordinate to your sense of *how* real they are, how incomparably skilled the execution is; just as the man's clever and arrogant face, absorbed in the information conveyed by this book, inwardly exercising his mastery of the movement of the stars, and his left hand holding a pair of dividers carelessly and proprietorially over the top of the globe are undermined by the melting candle, the sinking sand in the hour-glass and the symbolic, though bubble-free, *putto*.

Most of the paintings in the exhibition — though there are four outstanding works by Vermeer and six by De Hooch — are cruder and less concentrated than this. As Christopher Brown writes in his Preface, 'It was essentially a simple, popular art-form catering for a large, comparatively unsophisticated public.' But whether the life depicted is low or high — peasants drinking, having their teeth pulled or fighting over cards; soldiers in a guard-room; overdressed well-heeled youths at mixed parties, at which they might start removing their clothes for the game of 'lady come into the garden' — a strong whiff of melancholy prevails. It comes not from the survival of the traditional symbols but the contrast between the deep, resonant spaces with their heavy fabrics, chunky furniture, strong shadows, hefty walls on the one hand and the proportionately small, highly characterised, highly animated figures that occupy them. Their preoccupation with the activity of the moment — love-making, smoking, nursing a child, singing, cooking a pancake — is so accurately caught and the ripeness or withering of their flesh so cunningly lit, against the sturdy, linear settings, that you, the uninvolved onlooker, cannot help seeing them as transitory, fragile, bubble-like.

The painters of the Danish Golden Age did not on the whole go in for anything as busy as everyday life. Apart from one painting of the street in front of Copenhagen's modern prison with various minor dramas being rather hammily enacted among the passers-by, these are posed portraits of unpretentious ladies and gentlemen in their best attire or landscapes, seascapes and buildings which also look as if they have been brushed down and posed for the

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occasion. Even the leading artists — Eckersberg, Hansen, Köbke, Lundbye, Skovgaard — are still little known outside Denmark and it is not easy to pin down how they differ essentially from their local counterparts of the Regency / Empire / Biedermeier period in the rest of Europe. The spirits of Corot and the quieter English romantic landscapists seem to hover over them, but there is no evidence that the Danes knew their work. Alastair Smith, writing in the catalogue, defines the Danish speciality as 'small-scale "sketches", with unusual perspective effects, rendered in high tones'.

The most striking thing about them at first sight is their preternatural clarity and stillness. It seems to be, like Roed's empty cathedral interior or Eckersberg's spick-and-span view of the starboard guns and rigging of an anchored corvette, a deliberate clearing of the decks so as to exclude incident and emphasise permanent structure. When figures appear in these Danish landscapes, they appear less as characters or living creatures than as accents in a compositional whole. The only properly active element is light — even the wind is subdued. Yet the reality arrived at is not bleak or rugged, but friendly, virtually homely, a place in which to be refreshingly free of quotidian life and bourgeois comforts, but not too free. It is the lack of any sign of disturbance in the rest of the exhibition that makes Christen Köbke's *A View of a Lake in Copenhagen* the most memorable image of all. The smooth surface of the lake against a pale blue sky is pinky-mauve — at close quarters it is composed, like a proto-Riley, of blue, pink and purple horizontal stripes — while from the landing-stage, where two statuesque peasant women stand looking out towards a rowing-boat, projects a flagpole with a red and white Danish pennant just stirring in a faint breeze. In Danish terms that limp and solitary flag almost amounts to a riot — a violent assertion of reviving national pride. □

FILMS

'Ware wolf

John Coleman

The Company of Wolves (18)
Odeon, Leicester Square
Streets of Fire (15)
Empire
Lassiter (18)
Leicester Square Theatre; London release

Sarah Patterson in *The Company of Wolves*

UNLESS MY EYES deceived me, and Neil Jordan's unique and resonant **The Company of Wolves** is preoccupied with visual legerdemain, the film accommodates often extraordinary shifts in time to achieve some of its highest effects. At the start husband and wife motor up to their grand white mansion quite modernly and their elder daughter Alice goes haring upstairs, to scream 'Pest, pest!' outside the door of the attic bedroom in which her 13-year-old sister Rosaleen (Sarah Patterson) lies, mouth painted with angry Alice's lipstick, restless and dreaming. The real Rosaleen, then, is roughly contemporary and her broken dreams or nightmares form the surreal substance of what follows, her uneasy sleeping and last, rude awakening being — as it were — opening and closing brackets round the bizarre affair. This may be of comfort to those who prefer things tidy.

Make the most of it, then, since we are rapidly abducted into a series of shocks involving werewolves in many guises: homespun peasants, mock-Restoration grotesques at a wealthy wedding feast, a courtly huntsman. The script, by Jordan and Angela Carter from a Carter adaptation of one-and-a-bit of her prickly-Gothic short stories, retains some psychological core of a teenage girl's fascinated fears of sex. In fact, Angela Lansbury's bawdy, chattering, equivocal Granny — a super opportunity glintily grasped — is as likely to entertain young Rosaleen with such coarsenesses as '. . . and she found another husband not too shy to piss into a pot' as to scare her with warnings about men whose eyebrows meet: you feel there is more to this gabby old woman than her granniness, especially when she herself encounters a fate out of the played-up Little Red Riding Hood theme.

Stories growing out of stories, dreams within dreams as the truly stunning Sarah Patterson, herself a very unmere 13, moves her Rosaleen into the uncanny fairy-tale action; telling Mother (Tusse Silberg) the vengeful yarn of that wedding-party magicked by a pregnant peasant woman; falling for Micha Bergese's handsome, perfidious Huntsman. There are some grisly special transformations and there are some deceptively mild ones, when nursery animals loom large and menacing in a forest with a life of its own, reminding one that the

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Brothers Grimm and such would terrify the bejasus out of the infant mind.

It is probably that anguished, oppressive forest, studio-built at Shepperton by Anton Furst, which most expresses what Jordan wanted to achieve, his first and last resort. Wolves' eyes gleam redly before the creatures rush to assault, but they are almost the predictable. The giant place is full of other, shaking fauna; and its flora stirs into motion that verges on emotion, tendrils snaking viciously up to enwrap a lad, a row of high, hollow trees suddenly breaking into the blast of an organ. At which moment it is propitious to praise George Fenton's beautifully atmospheric score, a key-element. Neil Jordan himself, after the expert debut of *Angel*, has once again orchestrated a piece of utter originality.

The American Walter Hill is something of a cult director, with a following nearly as prepared to expatiate on what his films are about as he is. If he made more movies like *48 HRS*. I might be tempted to join the club. As it is, **Streets of Fire** revives in me wan memories of *The Driver* and *The Warriors*, emptinesses pleading for significance. *Two* opening titles give warning of what we may be in for this time round: 'A rock & roll fable' and 'Another time, another place'. Somewhere in a very loud and violent near-future, comely Diane Lane as Ellen, a rock singer whose powerful tones are borrowed from what the production notes describe as 'a collage of vocals', is kidnapped from a concert platform by brutish Raven, leader of a bikers' gang known as the Bombers. Ellen's tough and monosyllabic ex-lover Tom (Michael Paré) agrees to rescue her for current manager-boyfriend Billy Fish for $10,000. A soldier-girl McCoy (spirited Amy Madigan) aids Tom for ten per cent: she is a nice touch.

Elsewhere there are deliberately stereotyped bits and pieces: about 1,000 ear-splitting 'numbers', lots of neon, comic-book dialogue, fiery explosions, plenty of smoke and rain, bad bikers, stylised locations of varying squalor, ox-like heroism and renunciation. Mr Hill intended his 'fable' to be like this, an exercise of sorts, a composite parody. I wish I knew why. No, I don't. If waving into a void is in fashion, so be it.

Roger Young's **Lassiter** sets Tom Selleck, the latest hot property, more or less through his limited paces as the Yankee cat-burglar of the title, a jewel-thief doing very comfortably in the London of June 1939, until evil Inspector Becker (Bob Hoskins wrapped round a scowl) frames him into retrieving from the German Embassy ten million dollars' worth of uncut diamonds looted from Czechoslovakia. The biggest fun in this double-crossing caper, erratically written by David Taylor, occurs in the person of Lauren Hutton as Kari von Fursten, who dosses elegantly at the swastika-bedecked embassy and is surely the wickedest *femme fatale* in the world. 'She's a woman with appetites, unusual appetites,' offers one fellow, not mentioning that she really is fatal. 'I like a man with scars,' she states, approaching Lassiter at a gambling club. 'May I buy you a drink?' Then she sniffs coke while watching a brawl of a boxing-match and, when blood splashes her cheek, delicately dips a finger there and tastes it. Forget the plot: the Kari-on alone makes this a collector's item. □

THEATRE

Burp

Benedict Nightingale

The Devil and the Good Lord
SARTRE *Lyric, Hammersmith*

IT LEFT ME seriously undernourished, that year I've just completed as a resident maggot in the Big Apple. Where were the new plays? Come to that, where were the old plays? Increasingly, I found my critical stomach rumbling for want of an RSC on 47th Street, a National Theatre at Lincoln Center, or something somewhere to reassure me that serious drama had a present and even a bit of a past.

Well, I'm home now, and feeling like a famine victim who has unwisely treated himself to a sudden, multi-course blow-out. Three-odd hours of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, rather drabber and duller than it seemed at Stratford last year; three hours of Massinger's *New Way to Pay Old Debts* at the Pit, a curious amalgam of the clownish, the romantic and the grim, also from Stratford 1983; and nearly five hours of rarely staged Sartre. After a week spent laboriously rummaging in my native fleshpots, I'm not sure I want so much as a sniff of a minor classic again.

Actually, even my well-fed colleagues seemed to feel that way. As I left **The Devil and the Good Lord**, the earnest godlessness of its denouement echoing round my head, I found one slumped to his knees in exhausted surrender. 'You win,' he was blearily mumbling to the ghost of Jean-Paul. 'Anything you say I agree with. Anything at all.' By that time, we'd watched Sartre's Goetz von Berlichingen pass through a long Faustian phase, his only aim to disconcert God with the degree of the evil he could inflict on the German populace. We'd watched him swap his conical helmet for a monk's hood and painfully turn himself morally upside-down and inside-out, in a still more interminable struggle to astound the deity with the intensity of his goodness. Both ways, the result had been disastrous for the peasantry, helpful to the oppressive landowners, personally damaging to Goetz himself and, we were to understand, totally uninteresting to God. And so to the play's inevitable conclusion, with the hero discovering himself to be atheist, humanist, socialist and Sartrist — in his author's words, 'converting to man, breaking away from the morality of absolutes and finding a historical morality, human and particular'.

There are modern plays, just a few, which are big, bold and impressive; and there are modern plays, perhaps fewer in number, which are big, bold, impressive and tiresome. If I categorise *Devil* among the latter, it isn't just because of a prolixity that even Sartre's colleagues found self-indulgent back in 1951, when it was first staged. It's more because it attacks religion by travestying it and, often, in the most predictable way.

Imagine, if you can, a dramatist who proceeded to 'win' his case against socialism by bringing a caricature Stalin dementedly to life and allowing him to kill the odd million kulaks. Goetz in his monkish phase is no more representative of Christian virtue, with his trickery, his egomaniac rhetoric, his horror of sex and women, his mad masochistic gestures, his lust for power posing as love, his general self-absorption and pride; and yet Sartre's argument depends on us seeing him as just that, Christianity obnoxiously incarnate. Nor, for that matter, is the moral behaviour the play ends by recommending incompatible with belief in God, in either mediaeval Germany or modern times. Off marches Goetz with his peasant army, abandoning his self-serving pacifism to wage a just war against tyranny. So went plenty of Christians to fight Hitler, and so go some even today to resist dictatorship in Central America.

Devil sometimes seems biased and even dishonest, confused and even a bit silly; and yet, Sartre being Sartre, it can still trouble you with tantalising quandaries, tease you with intriguing paradoxes. Who would be in the dilemma of the priest who can save 200 of his fellow churchmen from certain slaughter only by leaving the anti-clerical faction, its women, its children open to a massacre far more bloody? And who would be Goetz at the end? 'I'll terrify them, I've no other way to love them,' declares Goetz of his rag-tag followers as he prepares for unequal battle against the local potentates. 'I'll command, because I've no other way to obey.' A balky yeoman thereupon announces that he'd rather die than submit to such a general. 'Then die, brother,' regretfully ripostes Goetz, slipping a knife into the fellow's heart. There are times when the play effectively demonstrates that kindness may be short-sighted and cruel, cruelty long-sighted and kind.

But isn't that, too, a conclusion decent Christians might selectively endorse? A pity Sartre squanders so much energy vengefully misconstruing people he might conceivably enrol among his social allies.

It seems a bit perverse to stick so lavishly peopled an epic on what might almost be a bird-table; but John Dexter has the skill to carry off the feat and he creates some striking effects on and around the small raised platform in the middle of the Lyric stage. How vividly, for instance, he manages the scene that shocked Paris in 1951 and left even Cocteau nervously wondering 'how far Sartre would go too far'. Down from the flies comes a vast crucifix, its peasant Christ brutishly grimacing in bewildered agony, and round it huddle the peasants themselves in their greys and browns, sad sacks begging a deaf deity for a miracle that, as it turns out, Goetz himself provides, by surreptitiously organising some personal stigmata. This, Gerard Murphy does with the bug-eyed glee that marks most of his performance, whether he's ineptly trying to win hearts or enthusiastically readying himself to gouge them out. If only he'd spent all that sweat and spirit on something that didn't leave the audience, too, looking rather as though it had been manoeuvred and manipulated, pushed, pummelled and mentally prodded through a 26-mile marathon. □

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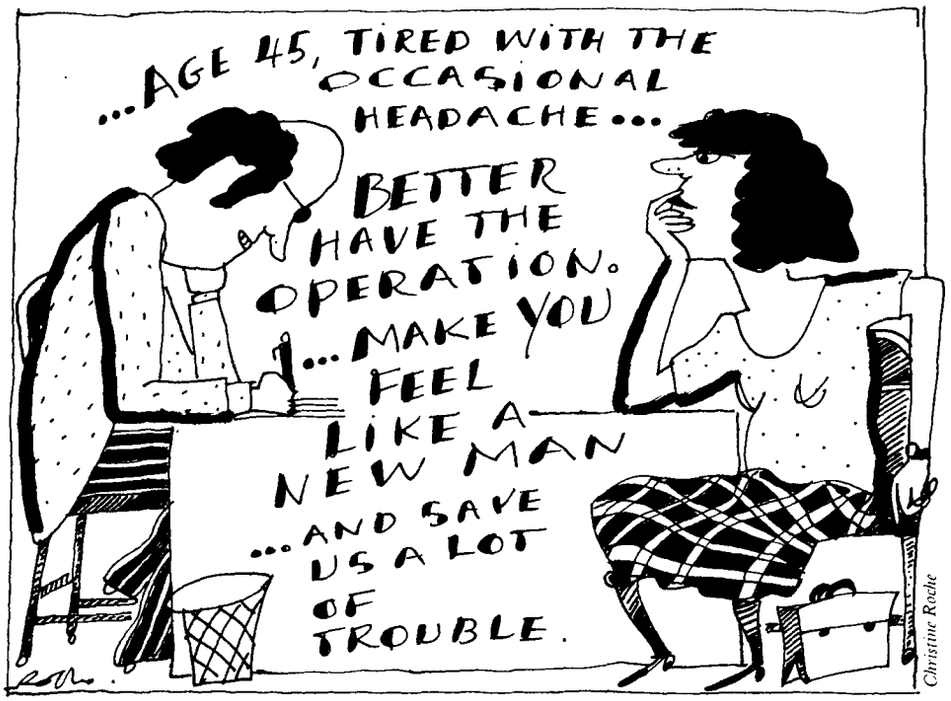
Before you could say knife


...AGE 45, TIRED WITH THE OCCASIONAL HEADACHE...
BETTER HAVE THE OPERATION. ...MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE A NEW MAN ...AND SAVE US A LOT OF TROUBLE.
Christine Roche

Nina Hibbin

'CYSTITIS?' said the doctor. 'You'd best have a hysterectomy. You'll feel a new woman.'

I'd just moved up to the North and this was my first visit to a GP. I'd wanted to know if it would be 'safe', at 49, to stop taking the pill, but he'd seized on my casual mention of an occasionally leaky bladder.

He hadn't asked about my personal circumstances. He hadn't examined me. His diagnosis was instant.

'At your age,' he said, 'you're almost sure to have a prolapsed womb. You don't want to risk conception so you might as well get rid of it. Kill two birds with one stone.'

'That's a bit drastic, isn't it?' I ventured.

'There's nothing to it. It's like having a new hairstyle,' he said. 'Women who object to a hysterectomy have a castration complex.' He scribbled on his pad. 'Take the little white pills and come back in six weeks' time,' he said. 'If it hasn't cleared up by then I'll arrange for you to go into hospital.'

It wasn't until I got outside that the full implications hit me. The doctor was probably a fool, I thought. But it could be true that my minor bladder problem was a symptom of something worse. Over the next few days the seed of worry he had sown developed into acute anxiety.

I've no idea whether any deep-seated psychological forces had come into play, but there were quite enough practical problems, anyway, to account for my mounting nervous tension. I was three weeks into a new and very challenging career in a male-dominated field. The last thing I needed was pain, debility, prolonged absence. Besides, my husband had left his London job to join me, so I was the family breadwinner at the time. Special circumstances? Maybe — but everyone's circumstances are special. When's a good time for an op?

I decided to kill the suspense by consulting a gynaecologist privately. For that, though, I needed a referral note from the doctor. I wasn't anxious to see him again, in case I lost my temper and burst into tears. Not that tears themselves — frustration at not being able to get through to men — matter; what matters is the 'poor-little-woman' misconstruction that most men put on them, which fouls up communication still further. To avoid this impasse, I didn't phone for an appointment; I wrote to him instead.

It was an angry letter. 'I came into your surgery a healthy woman,' I wrote. 'I left an emotional wreck.' Castration complex? Yes, if he liked. How would he feel if he complained of an itch at the end of his penis and was advised to have it chopped off? How many other women had he similarly distressed?

I asked for a note to the gynaecologist and enclosed a SAE. No reply. 'The doctor says you've got to come in and see him,' said the receptionist haughtily, when I phoned. I had no option but to arrange a date.

'Sit down,' said the doctor sharply, when it was my turn to go in, '— and let me tell you, I've lodged your letter with my solicitor.'

'I don't want to argue,' I said in a small voice. 'Please write the note and let me go.'

'Sit down when I tell you,' he roared, and called me a paranoiac.

'In that case,' I said, trying to bite down my anger, 'I'll need a note to a psychiatrist, too.'

In the heated exchanges that followed the inevitable happened: I burst into tears. His attitude changed at once — all kindness and concern. I found myself sobbing out a synopsis of my worries. 'Ah,' he said, 'then you are one of the very few women who would not benefit from the operation.' It was only then that he agreed to the referral.

Furious that tears and patronisation, rather than commonsense, had won the day, I had a bit of a go at him. He one-upped me by removing my name from his register before I had a chance to do it myself. But at least I'd got what I wanted.

The gynaecologist wondered why I'd bothered. 'You've no problems at all,' she said, 'except slightly relaxed muscles. You can live with that, can't you?'

I wrote a protest letter to the Regional Health Council. Six weeks later I received a curt, dismissive reply. By then, my self-confidence and serenity fully restored, I was well into my new job, with no time to follow the matter up.

Meanwhile, we had got to know a friendly couple at our village local. Jack, a brickie, was touchy and quick-tempered. Marge, who worked in a textile mill, used to wink at me behind his back. 'Men,' she would say, 'they're all the same. Like babies.' But she confessed that his moods were getting her down.

One evening Jack came into the pub alone, with a long face. 'It's Marge,' he said, 'she's very depressed. It's no good; she'll have to have the operation. It's the only way for women with nerves.'

As our circle of pub-friends widened, I became aware that my erstwhile doctor was not a one-off phenomenon. 'The operation' I discovered — and James Lefanu's alarming statistical report (*NS* 13 July) offers a Scottish parallel — was embedded in local family and medical sub-culture as the women's cure-all. Backache? Headache? Depression? A slight vaginal discharge? Whip it out! You'll feel a new woman.

I'm the one who got away. □

TELEVISION

Mary Harron

Bottoms

'THE FINEST television in the world' they tell us, in which case they ought to take a look at **'Allo, 'Allo** (BBC-1) (all the hilarity of life in occupied France) and **The Bottle Boys** (ITV). Until this I thought nothing could be worse than the imported American turkey **We Got It Made** (BBC-1) (two bachelors hire a sexy live-in maid — what an idea for a series! Television executives roll around the carpet, bang their heads in ecstacy, etc.); or maybe it's just that each country hits the bottom in its own way.

The Bottle Boys, which deals with the escapades of a group of milkmen (nudge nudge)

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and stars Robin Askwith of *Confessions of a Window Cleaner* fame, is being given a big push: it got the cover of the *TV Times* and they've even put out a record of the unspeakably awful theme song. The first episode, surprisingly, wasn't about housewives in shorty nightgowns, but about the threat of having a woman — a 'milk person' — on the team.

The difference between British and American garbage is instructive. The big joke in the lower depths of American sit-coms is that any woman over 25 is sexually ridiculous — a screaming caricature. But at least they're not surprised that women work. Britain is less advanced. The story of Joan the Milk Person touched off a bewildering clash of stereotypes. Joan stood for feminism (therefore unattractive, butch, disagreeable) and for female interference: she bans smoking and drinking in the boys' quarters, decorates them with chintz sofas and flowered curtains and makes them drink out of china cups. She is also — inevitably — sexually voracious, can't keep her hands off Robin (who is getting a bit old for these parts) and ends up thoroughly humiliated.

You could say that *The Bottle Boys* reflects the prejudices of the masses. But it was created and promoted by executives at London Weekend Television, who certainly don't think of themselves as the masses. There is something cold and unpleasant about this series.

Do They Mean Us? (BBC-2) is delightful, even if Derek Jamieson needs lessons in reading an auto-cue. This is a single and brilliant idea: to collect extracts from foreign television reports on Britain. Italian TV reported that 'English children are mad about "satanic" sweets' and that the whole country had gone mad over Dungeons and Dragons: 'At Cambridge there are 15 clubs where students act out these satanic games.' Iranian TV's report on Britain said 'You have to live under conditions of torture.' Showing two shaven head punks they explained, 'Young people look like this — they have a choice between drug addiction and alcoholism' (they have a point). But the Iranians' report on how old people are treated here, which was delivered with genuine outrage, should have stirred the conscience of any British viewer. Jamieson, whose comments are very fair, gave the final verdict, 'I'm left with the uncomfortable feeling we ought to see more of this on British television.'

Freud (BBC-2) has thudded on to the screen. There are attempts to lighten the tone: Freud is referred to as 'Siggy' and there was a potentially hilarious cocaine party with Siggy offering out bottles of white powder with missionary zeal. The problem, as with nearly all historical dramas, is too much exposition and a cautious, reverent tone. David Suchet is fine, but it's hard to dramatise an intellectual discovery.

The two most fun series on television are **The A Team** (ITV), which succeeds in making a witty adventure show out of the adventures of four Viet Nam vets, and **Bird of Prey** (BBC-1), which succeeds in making a thriller out of computer programming. The two have nothing in common but terrific pace and an imaginative way with a formula. Richard Griffiths is heartrendingly endearing as Henry Jay, the computer boffin no one suspects because he's so stolid and boring — what will Thursday nights be like without him? □

Naseem Khan

Hard words

THE pattern will be familiar to anyone who's ever been involved in anything called, however vaguely, 'alternative' or 'radical' — the poky offices, the inadequate heating, killing work schedules, the days when the only way to keep the whole thing going economically is to postpone taking your salary cheque. 'A depressing scenario,' says Rebecca O'Rourke, responsible for the publishing section of Hackney's community bookshop, Centerprise.

It's a scenario that has led to the death of many good, bright ideas (and the premature ageing of many good, bright people). More to the point, it played some part in the collapse earlier this year of the Publications Distribution Cooperative (PDC).

PDC was one of those good ideas that seem so obvious that the only surprise is that it didn't emerge earlier. After all, how else could small, radical, poorish publishers get their publications into readers' hands?

But, however obvious the need for a common distributor — and PDC was overwhelmed by client demand in its seven years of life — the practicalities of the situation turned out rather differently. When PDC finally closed its doors, it was with debts of over £100,000. This is all past history, blood under the bridge. A more fruitful area of enquiry is to look at the future for independent distribution. Has the PDC experience put paid to the chances of any similar operation? The climate, on the face of it, is not too conducive to new endeavours.

The timid might be alarmed, for instance, by the imminent demise of *Voices*. The quarterly journal of the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers, with its selections from writers' workshops and working-class autobiographies, surely serves much the same constituency as PDC? However, when one looks for straws in the wind, it is important to be careful about the nature of the wind. In the case of *Voices*, says Rebecca O'Rourke, it was not economics but, rather, a response to changing conditions. Individual groups (the FWWCP contains 26 member organisations) had gradually become far more adept at publishing their own work. The need could be as well served now by an annual anthology. The moral is that offspring of the '60s need to change if they are to survive into the '80s. And it is a lesson that more people than the FWWCP are taking on board. It is at the base of the successor to PDC, Turnaround Distribution.

Three of the four-person cooperative sat in their offices last week exuding a mixture of enthusiasm and realism. They're lovely offices — the entire open-plan spacious top floor of an old Islington bookbinders, full of gleaming polished boards, skylights and rafters. 'We don't know yet,' said David Musson cautiously, 'how cold it's going to get in winter.' But they've made plans, just in case. Nor, by analogy, do they know exactly how cold it's going to be when the £35,000 loan from the Greater London Enterprise Board falls due. But they've made plans they believe will work. Paradoxically, their strongest card — apart from the money and their own combined 35 years' experience in the book world — is the failure of PDC. The co-op didn't sink without trace; it left lessons behind.

For a start, Turnaround (David Musson, Theresa Stephenson, Bill Godber, Kingsley Dawson and an imminent new appointment) has firmly pruned the old PDC area of operation. Geographically, the five will deal directly with only Wales and the South: for the North, they liaise closely with the well-established Scottish and Northern Book Distribution Cooperative. They've dropped the magazine market that swamped PDC.

More important is the distinct change of focus. PDC sprang firmly from the alternative, lived with the alternative and, some would say, died with the alternative. Turnaround knows that it has to look wider to survive. 'We don't want to be marginalised,' David Musson said firmly, 'or to be a ghetto.' Apart from the adoption of more competitive business techniques (a computer), this means a determination to get into mainline bookshops (in addition to the hundred or so radical bookshops in Britain) as well as to take on the radical section of mainline publishers' lists. Indeed, they believe they can build a service that could attract small publishers unhappy with their present distributors. Other ideas are in various stages — a wholesale service for remaindered radical books, an assessment of the video and software market. With three or four hundred titles on their books, 'the graph so far,' they say firmly, 'seems to be going upwards.'

Sensible as it all sounds, one cannot but wonder wistfully at the fate of all those old initiatives, the new outlets for new books. Turnaround, determined not to get over-extended, is concentrating on bookshops alone. Newer ideas are to be found on other, more local fronts. The bookshop, for the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Bookshops, is by no means at the top of the outlet list. Different FWWCB members have found different solutions fit. Brighton's Queenspark sells its local histories most successfully on a door-to-door basis. Bristol's Broadsides found a new market when it got its publications into W.H. Smith's. Local newsagents, community centres, youth clubs, museums, after performances of selections from writers' anthologies — they're all avenues to explore.

There's a lot of work to be covered, a lot of experience to be digested and a fair amount of thinking as to whether it all has national, rather than local, significance. It's in fact a daunting brief for another new appointment — someone, financed by the GLC, to explore new possibilities of promotion and distribution. Small publishers, considers O'Rourke, will have to expand if they are to survive a post-GLC freeze. It will mean, like Turnaround, distinguishing between the ideal and the possible, and building now. □

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Weekend competition

No 2840 **Set by Snubbin**

Julie Andrews in *The Sound of Music* singing 'My Favourite Things': how long ago it all seems! Please sing to us of *your* favourite things in 1984. You may be as bitchy as you please. (If you think that you've forgotten the tune, start humming: it'll come back.) Two verses and one chorus max. by Wednesday 3 October.

No 2837 **Set by Tim Hopkins**

Famous nursery rhymes re-written in the style of a 20th-century poet.

Report **By Ms de Meaner**

It's not very often that the muffled snorts and splutters of plebeian amusement that weekly (not to say weakly) disturb the calm of my inner sanctum are worth the trouble of dislodging the cat, switching off the Dvorák, extinguishing the half-corona and making my way to the outer office to see what the fuss is about. But this week, my little ones, you've excelled yourselves. Those whom I've printed (and for whom, I think, fifteen pounds is the just reward) are only the tip of an iceberg whose brilliance makes me purr with profoundest pleasure. Particularly, there were several *Little Miss Muffet*s as written by Betjeman which might have made it had we not so recently given the old boy a turn. But do you think you could please refrain from letting this homage go to your heads? Than a smug comper there is nothing, I assure you, more obnoxious.

G.K. Chesterton's 'Doctor Foster'

Foster the physician, on his way to Gloucester, strode
With one eye raised to Heaven and the other on the road,
For the stormy skies were weeping and the way beset with holes
And the journey full of perils for the stoutest hearted souls,
Sure enough, unwary in the carelessness of haste
He plunged into a puddle which immersed him to the waist,
Alas for British courage, when he clambered out he swore
That the crooked road to Gloucester would see him nevermore.

PHILIP A. NICHOLSON

Seamus Heaney's 'Jack and Jill'

I remember first hearing the word 'tap';
I spat the shiny, unfamiliar syllable
From my mouth. At home, every cup
Of water was lugged by pail from the hill.

One day two kids, posh prods
From the city, trudged up for a bucketful.
We boys were waiting. 'Orange sods!
Brit bastards!' We cracked one's skull!

And chucked both down the steeper
Side. They didn't blab. Said they fell.
But no amount of vinegar and brown paper
Could patch those wounds. They're there still.

PETER NORMAN

Larkin's 'Ding Dong Bell'

The cat got chucked in the well
Who chucked her in? The village lout
Tom Thin, thin as an eel
And as slippery, with garbage smell.
Did the mog get out?
She did, the dripping black seal.

That far-seeing boy
Johnny Stout, fartishly fat, saved
The puking, retching half snuffed
Cat. A mere ploy:
Appetite recovered, he'll gorge himself on the paved
Floor of the Barn, serpent-like, STUFFED.

P. BALDWIN

Dorothy Parker's What Are Little Boys Made Of?

Back of my back they talk of me
Gabble and honk and hiss,
Foul little boys who make this noise,
Me, I can tell them this:
Better to shiver beneath the stars
Head on a female breast,
Than share the night with a froggy blight
Or lie with a snail to rest.
Better to see the sun come up
Along of a shapely one,
Than bed a male of puppy-dog's tail
And pray the day be done.
Back of my back they wag their chins,
Whinny and bleat so free,
It cuts no ice, we're sugar and spice,
Nice little girls are we.

GERRY HAMILL

T.S. Eliot's 'Hickory Dickory Dock'

This is the dry season of the hickory bush
And in Dickory the dock is silent and crumbled.
Past noon and past midnight are one.
I have seen the mouse in shadow.
Was it a run, or did my eyes deceive me?
I am an old man with uncertain vision.
Yet there seemed to be a striking
And the mouse seen no more.

GEORGE MOOR

Ted Hughes's 'Tom, Tom'

Thomas, pig-eyed
ears piping-flooded
since womb-sprung to a father's knee
saw, seized
that fat-tempting that pig.

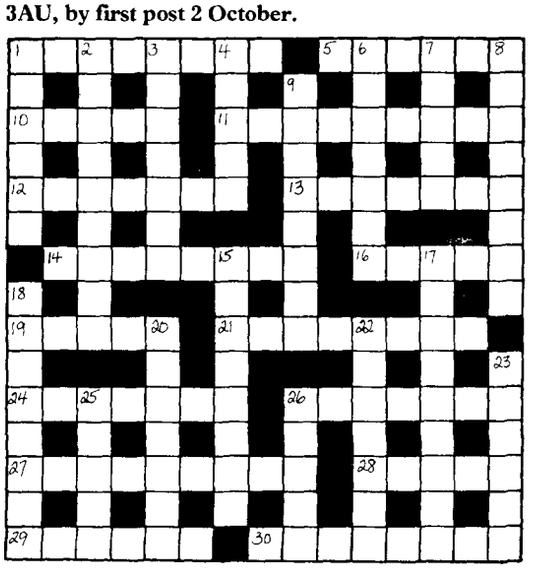
Thomas load-laden fled.
His juice-gorged self
pigged.

Thomas whip-skinned
face roaring-mouthed
load-unladen
fled
flayed.

MICHAEL ROSEN

Weekend Crossword 1454

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1454, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 2 October.



Note: In last week's Crossword (1453) line 12 across should have read (7) not (9) spaces.

ACROSS

1. Joining together again although not giving obedience (8)
5. Escorts who behead drug traffickers (6)
10. Where parents are about right (5)
11. March in which the favourites are returned after nothing goes wrong (9)
12. The reader is free to retire when about a hundred (7)
13. Arraign one member apiece (7)
14. Criminal skills return after a moulding (8)
16. Maturer kind of wine (5)
19. Is put into something to drink in church (5)
21. If a fellow were missing, a city-dweller would be an unfriendly person (8)
24. Circle over it if the town were in ruins (7)
26. Spending a morning in a shelter feeling guilty (7)
27. Provide a helping so that Henry had dinner (9)
28. Subject town (5)
29. Compels payment for unstarted intercourse (6)
30. Unpleasant feelings as I mix among men (8)

DOWN

1. The newspaper article has a little bit on the theatre (6)
2. Predicts safer cots will be distributed (9)
3. Smash the star into pieces (7)
4. Concerned with the drink rising in the river (5)
6. People chase after Jack's place (7)
7. Run for an actor (5)
8. With anger replacing love the poet has become something precious (8)
9. Lion and colt mingle in the dance (8)
15. Let in a happy place (8)
17. Queer male in female attire undisturbed in bed (9)
18. Carriage gives one painful expression in the nude (8)
20. Where to climb for what is left by the apple-picker (7)
22. Heroine is hothead in work by Lamb (7)
23. Creatures which increase but do not multiply (6)
25. The flower of the orchestra (5)
26. Where there is a contest a time is up (5)

SETSQUARE

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Application form, returnable by 12 October 1984, and detailed job description from Chief Personnel Officer, Town Hall, Catford, London SE6 4RU or telephone 01-690 7666 (24 hour ansaphone service) quoting reference CE 413(1) and job title.

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Our jobs are open equally to all races and both sexes.

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APPOINTMENTS

City of Manchester

TOWN CLERK'S DEPARTMENT

CAMPAIGN AND PUBLIC INFORMATION UNIT

UNIT CO-ORDINATOR

£11,364/£13,725

Re-advertisement

A new unit is to be established by the City Council with responsibility for co-ordinating and implementing a strategic and tactical campaign in support of local democracy and local government services. The unit will work alongside the Public Relations Office and will be responsible for developing strategies for action to protect jobs and services.

The unit will be the focus of resistance to current Government legislation which will adversely affect local government services and threaten local democracy.

Previous applicants need not re-apply as applications will be re-considered.

The City Council operates a Union Membership agreement under which a new employee is required to become a member of a recognised Union.

For further information please telephone **Keith Trelfa on 061-236 3377 Ext. 2206**

Applications, by letter, should be sent to the **Staff Officer (A/ACJ), Town Clerk's Department, Town Hall, Manchester, M60 2LA. Closing date: 5 October 1984.**

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Head of Benefits

£16,224 — £17,211 pa inc.

This is a key new post in the Finance Directorate responsible for all aspects of Housing Benefit administration and policy development in both the Public and Private sectors. You will be required to maintain a continuous review of all aspects of Housing Benefits and to build strong links with other organisations working in the field. The Council is currently undertaking a major initiative on Welfare Rights generally and the Head of Benefits will participate along with other officers in the development of an overall Council strategy.

Previous local government experience is not essential nor are particular qualifications required. The Council are seeking an individual who is able to combine managerial and communication skills with a creative approach to the increasing problems faced by both community and the Council. A high priority is attached to increasing take-up of all benefits and to maximising benefit payments through the positive use of the discretions available to the Council.

You will report directly to the Director of Finance on all policy issues and will work in close co-operation with key staff in the Finance, Housing and Welfare Rights areas.

It is planned to conduct the selection procedures for this post in the period 17-19 October 1984.

For an informal discussion please telephone John Beha Director of Finance on 01-800 1282 extension 202.

Application forms are available from John Penney, Head of Personnel Services, Town Hall, Mare Street E8 1EA or telephone 01-986 5331 (24 hour answering service) quoting reference KH800/NS.

Closing date: 5 October 1984.

The Council intends to decentralise its services, therefore the duties, hours of work or location of this post may be subject to change.

Job share applications will be welcomed.

We positively welcome applications from black people, disabled people and women where they are under-represented in particular jobs.

Hackney — a radical, socialist Borough

LISTINGS

THURS 20 SEPT

HACKNEY CND Week of Action on Civil Defence. 'Nuclear Attack' SANA video 5-6.30pm Hackney Town Hall, Mare St, E8. Rm. 102. Discn. led by Cllr. Brynley Heaven & CND. **Details: 01-249 8975.**

FRI 21 SEPT

HACKNEY CND Benefit Chat's Palace, Chatsworth Rd, E5. Adm. £2/£1 UB40

SAT 22 SEPT

HACKNEY Street Ballot on Civil Defence 10.30am onwards. **Details: 01-249 8975.**

TOTTENHAM 'Celebrate 25 years of Cuban Revolution' 3-6pm Tottenham Community Project, 628 High Road, N17. 'Life in Cuba Today' slides, Discn. on the significance of the Revolution led by Eva Amador Torres. Adm. 50p.

BRIXTON 'Irish in Britain - Alive and Kicking' day event 10am-12. St. Matthew's Church, Brixton Hill. Adm. £2. **Details: Connolly Assoc. 01-699 6137.**

WIMBLEDON Civil Defence Protest March. Assemble 1pm Queen's Rd Car Park. **Org. Wimbledon Disarmament Coalition.**

STIRLING Miners Support Rally 1pm Annfield Football Ground. Spkrs. Tony Benn, Audrey Wise, Ray Buckton, George Bolton. March: Assemble Raploch Community Centre, Glendevon Drive, 11.30am.

SUN 23 SEPT

HACKNEY Open day at Stoke Newington Bunker 12-5pm Stoke Newington Town Hall, Church St. Exhibition/display on Civil Defence **Details: 01-249 8975.**

MON 24 SEPT

LONDON DHSS Social Security Review: Beveridge Revised. Meeting & discn. led by Roger Smith of CPAG. 7pm October Gallery, 24 Old Gloucester St, WC1.

TUES 25 SEPT

WIMBLEDON SANA Nuclear Winter film & talk by Norman Barford. 8pm YMCA, The Broadway, SW19. Adm. Free.

NORTHWOOD Hillingdon CND presents 'Fall-Out Theatre' in 'The Galaxy's Guide to Survival' plus Spkr. Fred Barker of National CND 7.45pm Northwood Methodist Church Hall Oaklands Gate. Tickets £1/50p UB40 from 01-845 5197.

WED 26 SEPT

ISLINGTON 'Grenada — one year later' Spkr. Hugh O'Shaughnessy. 8pm Rm.3 Town Hall, Upper St, N1. **Org. Islington Fabian Soc.**

HAMPSTEAD 'Trident — yes or no' Debate between Cyril Townsend, MP Joint Hon. Sec. Conservative Parliamentary Defence Cttee. & Malcolm Chalmers, Bradford Uni. Sch. of Peace Studies. 8pm 'Pentameters' above 3 Horseshoes Pub, 28 Heath St, NW3. Drinks/Food. Adm Free. **Org. Hampstead CND.**

LONDON Tony Benn, guest spkr. 6.30pm Drill Hall, Chenies St, WC1. Adm. 50p **Org BAND, Book Action for Nuclear Disarmament.**

ISLINGTON 'Keeping the Peace? The Police & the Peace Movement' Spkrs. Jeremy Corbyn MP, Owen Davis. 8pm North Library, Manor Gdns, N7. **Org. Islington CND.**

LONDON The Miners' Strike, spkr from NUM plus Report from TUC Congress by Jim Gee. 6pm The Cock Tavern, Phoenix Rd, NW1. **Org. SCPS Broad Left, Oxford House, London, E2.**

THURS 27 SEPT

RICHMOND 'Peace Festival' Spkrs. incl. Michael Foot MP. 8pm York House, York St, Twickenham. **Org Richmond & Barnes CLP. Details: Keith Vaz 01-278 6452 (day) 01-878 5699 (eves)**

HARINGEY Public Meeting on Prevention of Terrorism Act. Video 'It's a free country'. Spkrs. Frank Murphy, Sarah Spencer, NCCL, Cecil Gutzmore, NCAPB. 7.30pm Haringey TU & Community Centre, 2a Brabant Rd., N22. **Org. Haringey Independent Police Cttee.**

FRI 28 SEPT

MANCHESTER 'Images of Industrial Life' — wkend conf. of Soc. of Industrial Tutors. Spkrs. incl. Bea Campbell, Ken Loach, Jim Allen, Gus Macdonald. **Details: John McIlroy 061 273 3333 x. 3530.**

SAT 29 SEPT

CAMBRIDGE Fortress East Anglia — CND planning workshop for new campaign directed at US bases. **Details: 0223 316183/ 0223 63154.**

LONDON 'Law & Order in the 80's.' Socialist Society Dayschool. Spkrs. incl. Stuart Hall, Jock Young. 2-7pm County Hall, SE1. Adm £1.50/75p UB40. **Details: Socialist Society 01-734 8501.**

LONDON Artists & Craftworkers for Peace working together 10am-5pm United Reformed Church, Grove Hall, Wanstead, E11 in creative contrast to Operation Lionheart. Bring skills to show and share. Refreshments, creche, play for children, exhibitions, performance arts. **Org. Wanstead & Woodford CND 01-504 1630.**

STAFFORDSHIRE World Recession & the Crisis in Africa — 1984 Review of African Political Economy Conf. University of Keele. **Details: Peter Lawrence, Dept of Economics. 0782 621111.**

FORTHCOMING

1 OCT CAMDEN Public Meeting on care of black/ethnic minority children 7pm Council Chamber, Camden Town Hall, Euston Rd, NW1. Creche, Bengali, Chinese, Greek interpreters available. Disabled access. **Details: Candy Onifade 01-278 4444 x 2094.**

1 OCT LONDON 'Stop the strip searches in Armagh Prison. Picket Thames TV, 306 Euston Rd, NW1 12-2pm. Org. S. London Irish Solidarity Cttee.

7 OCT LONDON Free Nelson Mandela sponsored cycle ride. 11am from Northumberland Ave. Silly bikes/tandems welcome. **Details: AAM 01-387 7966.**

13 OCT PECKHAM One-day conf. to discuss the response of advice agencies and community orgs. to the erosion of civil liberties. 10am-4pm Peckham Town Hall, Peckham Rd.

15 OCT LONDON 'Beneath the white coat': a fortnightly series of seminars on science & politics: 'Alternative medicine: putting theory into practice' Jeanette Mitchell (GLC) 6.30pm Adam's Arms, 4 Conway St, W1. **Org. British Soc. for Social Responsibility in Science.**

17 OCT LONDON Mortgage Finance for Housing Co-ops 1.30-4.30pm Conference Rm. A, 157 Waterloo Rd, SE1. Cost £12 incl tea, papers £8 HEO affiliates. Bursaries available. **Details: Mike Ray HEO Empty Property Unit 01-633 9377.**

18 OCT LONDON 'Can Disarmament Negotiations hope to Work?' Philip Noel Baker Memorial Lecture by Johan Galtung. 7.30pm Friends House, Euston Road, NW1. Adm. Free. **Org. UNA 01-930 2931.**

31 OCT LONDON 'South Africa — the Struggle for Trade Union Rights' plus video 'We Live like Dogs'. Spkr. from South African Labour Education Project. 6pm The Cock Tavern, Phoenix Rd, NW1. Org. SCPS Broad Left. **Details: Peter Lush 01-515 2001 (eves).**

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc.

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MEETINGS

CRITIQUE/SOCIALIST SOCIETY

'What is Socialism?'

Friday 5 October
IS SOCIALISM FEASIBLE IN 'UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES?
Speakers: **Robin Blackburn, Mick Cox, Andrew Gunter-Frank.** Chairing: **Ahmad Ghotbi.**

Friday 7 December
IS SOCIALIST PLANNING FEASIBLE WITHOUT DEMOCRACY?
Speakers: **Stuart Holland, Sandy Smith, Hilary Wainwright.** Chairing: **John Palmer.**

Friday 11 January '85
IS MARKET SOCIALISM FEASIBLE?
Speakers: **Geoff Hodgson, Oliver McDonald, Hillel Ticktin.** Chairing: **Ahmad Ghotbi.**

Friday 1 February '85
WILL THERE BE FAMILY UNDER SOCIALISM?
Speakers: **Ahmad Ghotbi, Barbara Taylor, Annie Whitehead.** Chairing: **Hilary Wainwright.**

Friday 1 March '85
WHAT WOULD A SOCIALIST ECONOMY BE LIKE?
Speakers: **Ernest Mandel, Hillel Ticktin, Mike Williams.** Chairing: **Ahmad Ghotbi.**

Friday 26 April l'85
IS STATE ABOLITION & WORKERS SELF-ACTIVITY FEASIBLE?
Speakers: **Bob Arnot, Bob Jessop, John Palmer.** Chairing: **Ahmad Ghotbi.**

Thursday 9 May '85
WHAT KIND OF PARTY SHOULD THE LEFT BE FIGHTING FOR?
Speakers: **Martin Jacques, Scott Meikle, Ralph Miliband.** Chairing: **Sarah Benton.**

The talks listed above will be published next year, as a book, introduced and edited by Ahmad Ghotbi.

Place: **University of London Union, Malet Street, London, WC1.**
ALL MEETINGS 7.30p.m.

THE DEBT CRISIS

Day Conference Sat. 22 Sept.
Central Hall Westminster, Matthew Parker Street, SW1
11 a.m.-4.30 p.m.
Speakers include:
Roy Hattersley MP
Shadow Chancellor
Workshops on Special Topics
Adm. £1, unwaged 50p
Organised by World Development Movement
Tel. 01-836 3672

SOCIALIST SOCIETY DAY SCHOOL

'Law and Order in the 80s'

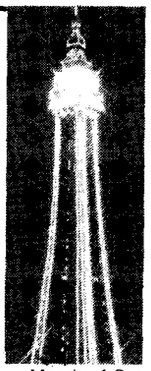
Speakers include: **Stuart Hall, Jock Young, Cecil Gutzmore.**

Representatives from:
Southall Police Monitoring Group, Sheffield Police Watch and the Campaign Against the Police Bill.

Saturday **29 September**
County Hall, London
2-7 p.m.
Admission: **£1.50/75p** concessions
Telephone **01-734 8501**

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme. Informal Question/Answer Meeting, 'The Bhagavad-Gita as Yoga'. Sun. 23 Sept. 8 p.m. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

AGENDA '84



SOCIALISM & INTERNATIONALISM

A SERIES OF **FABIAN SOCIETY** MEETINGS IN BLACKPOOL

Labour Party Conference 1984

Sunday 30 Sept. 3.30pm tea available
Opera House Foyer, Winter Gardens

SOCIALISM & FEMINISM IN AMERICA AND BRITAIN
Barbara Ehrenreich
co-chair Democratic Socialists of America
Chair: Tessa Blackstone

Monday 1 Oct. 10pm-midnight bar from 9.30pm
Princess Suite, Imperial Hotel, Nth Promenade

SOCIALISM & NATIONALISM IN IRELAND
Dick Spring Leader, Irish Labour Party, John Hume MP Leader, Social Democratic & Labour Party, Chair: Jane Ewart-Biggs

Tuesday 2 Oct. 10pm-midnight bar from 9.30pm
Princess Suite, Imperial Hotel, Nth Promenade

SOCIALISM & BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY
Denis Healey MP, Chair: Robin Cook MP

Tickets £1.00 each available from 11 Dartmouth Street, London SW1H 9BN
01-222 8877

PUBLIC ENTERPRISE GROUP
FRINGE MEETING
4 OCTOBER BLACKPOOL
Opera House Circle Lounge Bar
5.15 *John Prescott* M.P. Speaker.
Labour's Spokesman on Transport.
'IS THERE A PUBLIC INTEREST LEFT'?
The private government of Mrs Thatcher.
Susan Hoyle: Transport 2000
Speaker

LABOUR PARTY *Conference. Northern* couple require two tickets for Visitor's Gallery in exchange for payment to individual, ward, constituency, Third World or other choice. Box 9266.

There's still time to advertise your
FRINGE MEETING in AGENDA '84
Call: David Jones
01-251 5487

COURSES

GURDJIEFF/OUSPENSKY CENTRE ACCEPTING STUDENTS NOW. Tel: Chorley Wood 4792.

THE CENTRE FOR ANALYTICAL *PSYCHOTHERAPY,* *Upper Harley Street,* London. Training and treatment available. For details telephone 01-935 3070.

COUNSELLING

PERSONAL, RELATIONSHIP and sexual counselling with experienced and qualified counsellor. Weekly sessions. 01-299 1777.

TELE-LIFELINES — Friendly, sympathetic, professional help with personal problems by experienced counsellor — by telephone. S.a.e., please, for free pamphlet. Box 9244.

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CARING BODYMIND PSYCHOTHERAPIST (Registered member — Association for Bodymind Therapy). Phone 01-794 4038.

EXPERIENCED, CARING PSYCHOTHERAPISTS. 01-794 6810, 01-586 4109, 01-883 5418.

ACCOMMODATION

BEAUTIFUL, SUNNY room with private bathroom and entrance, Islington N1 house, for a quiet female. £45 p.w. 01-359 4391.

DRISCOLL HOUSE, 200 single rooms, p.b. £50 p.w. 172 New Kent Rd, London SE1. 01-703 4175.

HOLIDAY FLATS/Houses to let. King's Cross, London. Telephone 01-607 4518.

LEFT-WING Labour Councillor, Paddington, into opera out of rock, needs flat mate now. £125 p.c.m. Box 9243.

WANTED 4TH person to buy into mixed household in large collective house, overlooking Victoria Park, Hackney. Tel. 01-985 0110.

HEARTSEARCH

HEARTSEARCH ADS MAKE CONTACTS SIMPLE AND INEXPENSIVE. Just **£4** buys you an ad. of up to **24 WORDS** and a **FREE BOX NUMBER!** If you want to say more, ***extra words are only 26p each.*** We send your replies on to you at no extra charge. Even sending your ad to us costs nothing if you use our **FREEPOST** address: Classified Dept. New Statesman, FREEPOST, London EC1B 1EB You can also phone your ad in to us and pay by credit card: Telephone 01-251 5487/8. (Note — Free box numbers only available with this offer — min. charge £4). To reply to a box number, write your reply (if more than one reply enclose each in a separate envelope), place in an envelope marked clearly with the box number, and send to: Box No. Replies, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

ANCIENT, BUT cheerful, old girl badly needs a *male companion* for the twilight evenings. N. London. Box 9259.

ARE YOU a lively minded individual, 18-80, enjoying the arts, discussions, conferences, rambles, dancing? The Progressive League caters for Mind, Body and intellectual Stimulus. And it's so cheap. Ring 01-452 8358.

ARE YOU looking for a 48 yr-old softly bearded, financially independent antiquary in SW1 London, with leftist views, enjoying the ups and downs of life? Box 9232.

ATTRACTIVE FEMALE Arts graduate, 34, wide range of interests, seeks sensitive, educated man, for affection and lasting relationship. Box 9248.

ATTRACTIVE, AFFABLE, fairly affluent engineer, 42, without ties, unchauvinistic and much travelled: likes conversation, countryside, sharing, learning: seeks *compatible woman (children welcome), mid-*Scotland. Box 9196.

ATTRACTIVE, CARING professional woman, mid 40s, seeks graduate professional man late 40s-55, share classical music, theatre, cinema, wining and dining, good conversation. Greater London. Box 9201.

DATELINE'S PSYCHOLOGICALLY accurate introductions lead to pleasant friendships, spontaneous affairs and firm, lasting relationships including marriage. All ages, all areas. Free details: Dateline Computer Dating, Dept. (7NS), 23 Abingdon Rd, London W8. Tel. 01-938 1011.

DEVON-BASED: attractive, creative lady (44), seeks male companion with sense of humour, who shares enthusiasm for life & living; interests walking, cycling, theatre, arts, books, eating/drinking. Box 9246.

HAPPY, ATTRACTIVE, intelligent, sensitive, independent woman, 33, living London would like same in man for meaningful, sometimes exciting friendship/companionship. Photo appreciated. Box 9250.

INDIAN GRADUATE 44, separated, non-smoker, wishes to meet compassionate lady 30-40, irrespective of race or religion for love and lasting friendship. Interest: travel, music and reading. Please reply with phone no. Box 9249.

INTERESTING, INTERESTED graduate (48), seeks *compatible companions for walking,* (Cotswolds), arts (Avon). She; just faintly *Posyesque, identikit Guardian reader. You* — ? All informative letters answered. Box 9253.

LADY, SINCERE, understanding, interested in music, ecology, seeks male 39/50, must have dark eyes, over 5' 6" tall. Photo *appreciated: returned.* Box 9231.

LADY WOULD like to meet gentleman 60+. Independent. Friendship, London. Box 9261.

LESBIAN/GAY friends wanted with special interests in Russian Psychiatry. Preferably *unemployed, preferably souls. I'm* 29, female, attractive, good-natured, lonely and discreet. Box 9265.

LIVELY, WARM, ATTRACTIVE
female, forties, seeks intelligent, loving male, with sense of humour — *for comfortable togetherness. London, surrounding area.*
Box 9260

LONDON MALE, 40s, interests general, countryside, conversations, doing things together, science etc., seeks interesting, attractive, broad-minded female, possibly with business or academic background, view *serious relationship.* Box 9245.

M & F JEWISH FRIENDSHIP/Marriage Agency has many attractive, intelligent young ladies seeking genuine introductions. Write Box 9204 or tel. 01-340 5616.

ROBERT, 5' 8", 35, bisexual, educated, seeks non-smoking friends. Genuine friendship and sense of *humour more important* than age, appearance or gender. Devon/Cornwall. Box 9262.

ROSE, SINGLE, 33, seeks friendship of non-smoking, single man, to enjoy music, cycling, tennis, reflexion passion and enthusiasm ever more. York/Leeds area. Box 9270.

SLIM, INTELLIGENT & happy male, early 30s, would like to spirit adventurous, attractive lady, on an all expenses paid romantic & luxurious weekend in Paris at the end of October. Please write, enclosing telephone no for a prelimary meeting. Box 9263.

SLIM, SUCCESSFUL, socialist, single female, 32, *realising that career she adores is not* everything, seeks sunny-natured, caring man, to share some good times. Edinburgh area. Box 9269.

SOUTH YORKS area. Attractive 34 year-old graduate, tall and slim, divorced 3 years, seeks company of clean-shaven, non-smoking *professional male.* Box 9264.

TALL, SENSUOUS man (40s), humorous, irreverent, earthy, missing warmth, affection, intimacy in unsuccessful attachment, seeks attractive, adventurous woman, for no-strings mutual boltholing expeditions. Box 9194.

THE MARRIAGE BUREAU (Heather Jenner), 124 New Bond Street, W1. Tel. 01-629 9634. Consult us for individual attention.

UNCOMPLICATED, WARM, single, youthful male graduate, 37, usual cultural pursuits and interesting life-style involving socialising, fireside wine, countryside, isolated Greek Islands, seeks like-minded, adventurous, caring girl to share established interests and *explore the new.* Box 9251.

WELL-MEANING Guardian reader, with CND badge and bicycle, 31, seeks male preferably over 5' 10", to *help mend punctures.* (Pass the sick bag, Alice). Box 9247.

WHITE PROFESSIONAL American male, age 42 would like to correspond with attractive English lady, 25-40. Object: immediate friendship, future: matrimony. Box 9254.

WOULD-BE WRITER, male, 26, very good appearance, interesting and communicative, wants to meet an older woman with intellectual interests, for sincere relationship. London. Box 9209.

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